MEDIEVAL ART AT THE INTERSECTION OF
VISUALITY AND MATERIAL CULTURE

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Medieval Art at the Intersection of Visuality and Material Culture

Studies in the 'Semantics of Vision'

Edited by
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BREPOLS

For Silke Tammen

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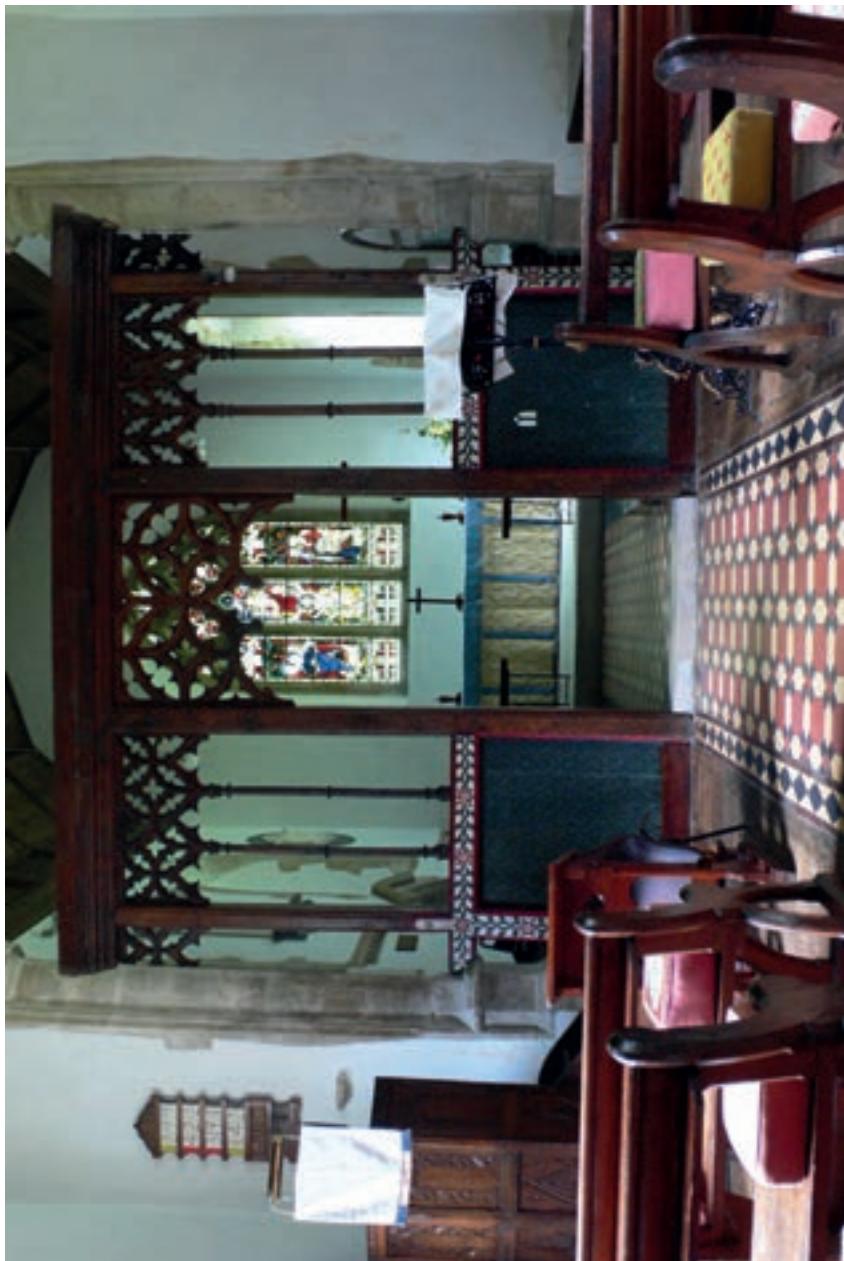
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Acknowledgements

The idea behind this book, to combine the examination of medieval visuality with an approach grounded in materiality, emerged in the early days after my PhD exams. Its immediate outcome was a conference held at the University of Bern in 2010 which provided the nucleus to this volume, even if it was still to evolve quite substantially from there. My first heartfelt thanks go to all those who participated in laying this first foundation stone to the present book: Foremost to Hans Belting, who, kindly accepting an invitation to give the Ellen J. Beer Memorial Lecture at the University of Bern that year, drew one of the highest levels of attendance to this event with his keynote address, 'Licht versus Bild: Ein Blickwechsel zwischen zwei Ordnungen des Sehens'; then to Silke Tammen (†), Berthold Hub, Cynthia Hahn, Anne Dunlop, Jens Rüffer, and Wendy Shaw. The conference in Bern was the result of a close collaboration with Thomas Dittelbach and would not have been possible without the support of Norberto Gramaccini, chair of medieval art at the Institute for Art History at the University of Bern at the time. Thanks to the generosity of the Ellen J. Beer Stiftung, the Max und Elsa Beer-Brawand-Fonds, and the Verein der Alumni et Amici des Instituts für Kunstgeschichte Bern, this workshop established a dialogue between scholars on both sides of the Atlantic, a relationship which would continue to thrive as this project evolved.

One of the conference participants, Silke Tammen, tragically passed away before the realization of this book project. Her passionate, inquisitive spirit has inspired me ever since I began studying art history. Her research fundamentally contributed to the development of this project, which is why this volume is dedicated to her.

As the idea for a book concretized, Bissera V. Pentcheva and Tina Bawden were solicited to contribute and generously accepted to do so. I am particularly grateful to Tina Bawden and Norbert Parsch for their help with the final proofreading edits to Silke Tammen's contribution.

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RAPHAÈLE PREISINGER

Introduction

A Return to Medieval Visuality after the Material Turn

This book is an attempt to reconcile two seemingly contradictory trends in the historiography of medieval art: the focus on questions of visuality, and the more recent emphasis on materiality phrased in terms of 'material culture'. Until a few years ago, historical and art-historical research strongly emphasized the former, that is, an understanding of sight and the visual extending beyond the conception of vision as a physical phenomenon towards the cultural construction of vision;[1] this tendency has since given way to an intensified examination of materiality and a more multisensory approach to medieval art, perceived as a counterpoint to the study of visuality as defined in ocularcentric terms.[2] This heightened attention to matter and bodily perception

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1 While attempts to frame medieval vision formerly concentrated on the history of optics and perspective, over the last two decades, medieval visuality has been awarded heightened scholarly attention. See, for example, Nelson, *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance*; Hamburger, 'Seeing and Believing'; Kessler, *Spiritual Seeing*; Biernoff, *Sight and Embodiment*; Tammen, 'Wahrnehmung, Sehen und Bildwahrnehmung im Mittelalter'; Akbari, *Seeing through the Veil*; Ganz and Lentes, *Ästhetik des Unsichtbaren*; Denery, *Seeing and Being Seen in the Later Medieval World*; de Nie, Morrison, and Mostert, *Seeing the Invisible in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*; Starkey, *Visual Culture and the German Middle Ages*; Hamburger and Bouché, *The Mind's Eye*; Ganz, 'Oculus interior'; Hahn, 'Vision'; Laugerud, 'Visuality and Devotion in the Middle Ages'; Ganz, *Medien der Offenbarung*; Ganz and Lentes, *Sehen und Sakralität in der Vormoderne*; Hamburger, 'Visible'; Hamburger, 'Mysticism and Visuality'; Ganz and Neuner, *Mobile Eyes*; Ganz, 'Visio depicta'; and Kessler and Newhauser, *Optics, Ethics, and Art in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, which is situated at the intersection of the examination of physiological vision and visuality, with a focus on the ethical implications of vision.

2 The turn to materiality and a more multisensory approach is observable, for instance, in Pentcheva, *The Sensual Icon*; Bynum, *Christian Materiality*; Carruthers, *The Experience of Beauty in the Middle Ages*; Jørgensen and others, *The Saturated Sensorium*; Anderson,

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in art history seems to have — partly, at least — arisen as a reaction against 'the oddly disembodied sign or image' of former scholarship.[3]

In art history, a conception of the artwork as a stepping stone to the invisible has been alimented by medieval theories casting material objects as references beyond themselves and a model of vision based upon a Neoplatonic notion of knowledge.[4] According to St Augustine's conception of vision, which had pervasive influence throughout the Middle Ages, approaching God amounted to a process of abstraction, progressively leading the perceiving subject away from the object of sight and towards an internal 'truth'.[5] More recently, scholars have stressed a different understanding of medieval art, one based on popular piety, and made a case for locating power in the matter of objects. According to Caroline Walker Bynum, towards the later Middle Ages, devotional objects gained increasing potency and prominence; this 'materialization of piety' was, however, perceived as 'insistent' and 'problematic': 'Holy matter was […] both radical threat and radical opportunity'.[6] The tendency in scholarship to describe the later Middle Ages as a period geared towards inner piety and visuality might reflect an attitude that paradoxically resulted from the heightened attention awarded to material objects, as Bynum suggests. Techniques of interior visualization which became increasingly important in the later medieval period might accordingly have aimed at reducing the threats presented to the soul by a religiosity focused on material objects.[7]

In accordance with the heightened relevance of both the visual and material objects to the later Middle Ages, a return to the visual is now in order that takes into account the insights gleaned from the 'material turn'. The essays in this collection represent a fusion of the recent focus on materiality with questions of visuality and thus build bridges between two corpuses of scholarship which, overall, have hitherto appeared strangely disconnected. If we strive for a truly holistic understanding of medieval artworks, the multisensorial approach to medieval art introduced by the more recent focus on materiality, with its emphasis on reconstructing the sensually stimulating situations in which artworks were perceived, and the bodily and tactile reactions aroused by them, can and should not evade questions of visuality.

Dunlop, and Smith, *The Matter of Art*; Hahn and Klein, *Saints and Sacred Matter*; Pentcheva, *Hagia Sophia*; and Pentcheva, *Aural Architecture in Byzantium*.

3   Anderson, Dunlop, and Smith, 'Introduction', p. 6.
4   Cf. e.g. Hamburger, 'The Visual and the Visionary', p. 170: 'Whereas Saint Bernard had argued that imagery was an obstacle to transcendent experience, by the end of the thirteenth century imagery was, to the contrary, frequently considered an ideal vehicle for transporting the soul to God'.
5   Cf. note 22 below.
6   Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, p. 20.
7   The significance of techniques of interior visualization for later medieval devotional practice has been described by Lentes, 'Inneres Auge, äußerer Blick und heilige Schau' and Preisinger, *'Lignum vitae'* in particular.

Closing the gap between the study of medieval visuality and the more recent focus on material culture requires re-embodying medieval vision. The firm rootedness of the act of seeing in the body, which is evident in view of the tactility of sight accompanying the persistent appreciation of the extramission theory of sight throughout the Middle Ages, is revealed by Berthold Hub in his introductory essay to this collection. It stands in sharp contrast with the process of abstraction vision was associated with in the context of mystical theory. Hub demonstrates that, contrary to widespread belief, in the later Middle Ages, the intromission theory of sight, based on the passive reception of light rays by the perceiving subject, did not replace the formerly predominant extramission theory, which rests upon the notion of material and sensitive visual rays emanating from the subject. Rather, the two models coexisted through to the end of this period. Because this insight provides the necessary basis for harmonizing the study of visuality with that of materiality in the Middle Ages, it is given ample space in the present volume.

Hub's findings echo Suzannah Biernoff's reckoning of sight as the privileged bodily experience of the divine, a crucial point which seems to have been overlooked amidst the current focus on materiality. In her seminal 2002 book on medieval visuality, *Sight and Embodiment in the Middle Ages*, Biernoff asserted that 'the visual relationship — more than any other sensory interaction — allowed for bodily participation in the divine',[8] an insight closing the gap between ocularcentric and more multisensorial approaches which makes a return to questions of visuality essential to the consideration of artworks in the context of the 'material turn'. As 'redemptive vision', the label attributed by Biernoff to her discussion of sight 'as a visual palpation or a deep, interior "touch"',[9] was firmly rooted in optical theory, it seems important to reintroduce all aspects of medieval vision — optical, carnal, redemptive — into the current discussion.

Indeed, medieval visuality was not governed by one, predominant 'way of seeing', but by a variety of concepts and notions that coexisted alongside each other, amounting to a 'visual spectrum' that comprised heterogeneous and sometimes even contradictory assumptions about what it means to 'see'. As is well known, visualization processes became increasingly important from the thirteenth century onward. The heightened attention paid to physical, outer vision in religious practice was accompanied by a steep rise in the production of religious images,[10] rendering their investigation essential to an understanding of medieval visuality. By examining how material artworks broach the issue of sight, either explicitly by putting the 'eye' or the act of seeing — corporeal or

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8   Biernoff, *Sight and Embodiment*, p. 134. Biernoff refers to the thirteenth-century perspectivist tradition here.
9   Biernoff, *Sight and Embodiment*, p. 134.
10 For a (non-exhaustive) list of authors referring to this heightened attention, cf. Biernoff, *Sight and Embodiment*, p. 133, n. 1.

spiritual — at the centre of iconographical schemes, or implicitly by the way in which they channel the viewer's outer or inner gaze, the focused studies in this book allow us to access an understanding of medieval visuality that extends beyond the illustration of textual accounts of vision.

Innovations in scholastic natural philosophy were long considered paramount in explaining shifts in medieval religious practice, including transformations in the visual domain.[11] Conversely, Dallas Denery II has shown that practices of religious life, in turn, gave rise to questions and concerns that influenced conceptualizations of vision.[12] As underlined by David Ganz in his introduction to *Sehen und Sakralität in der Vormoderne*,[13] adequately approaching medieval visuality requires taking into account experimental, technical, and aesthetic dimensions and acknowledgement of the various conceptualizations of vision developed in the theoretical field: Considering both theoretical writings and cultural practice makes it possible to trace the mutual influences that these two spheres exerted on each other and helps to avoid overstating the impact of either.

In accordance with the ongoing questioning of traditional subcategories of art such as Romanesque, Gothic, Byzantine, and Islamic, which are founded on hierarchies of knowledge whose rationales are currently being challenged,[14] the essays in this volume cover a wide range of topics, not only temporally but also geographically, making it possible to grasp the exchange, interaction, and parallel developments throughout the medieval world at large. Correspondingly, the essays in this volume are organized by linked, conceptual categories, rather than chronologically or according to traditional rubrics such as medium, culture, or patronage.

To get a glimpse at how works of art can help us approximate a pluralistically construed 'medieval gaze', I would like to briefly consider the *Table of the Seven Deadly Sins* by Hiëronymus Bosch in the Museo Nacional del Prado in Madrid of 1505–10 (Plate I), which takes up medieval notions of vision. In the centre of the painting, God's omniscient eye, embedded in the iconographical context of death and resurrection, heaven and hell, alludes to the notion of a universal, all-encompassing, and unclouded mode of seeing and knowing reserved to God, thus realizing the ultimate argument of Peter of Limoges's *Tractatus moralis de oculo*, composed in Paris as an aid for preachers between 1274/75 and 1289, which had pervasive influence through to the end of the medieval period.[15] In the pupil of God's eye, the threatening words 'Cave cave d[omin]us videt', can be read; they warn us against the wrong assumption of

11 Lindberg, Tachau, and Akbari all assume that innovations in optics led to broad cultural changes. Cf. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision*; Tachau, *Vision and Certitude in the Age of Ockham*; Akbari, *Seeing through the Veil*.

12 This observation is at the base of Denery, *Seeing and Being Seen in the Later Medieval World*.

13 Ganz, 'Einführung', p. 11.

14 Cf. for instance, Hoffman, 'Introduction'.

15 Cf. Kessler and Newhauser, 'Introduction', pp. 5–6.

God's blindness for one's sins, a motif typically dealt with by medieval moralists which is at the core of Bosch's painting and its theorization of vision.[16] God's vision — which the beholder is overwhelmingly confronted with by Bosch, as it is in fact him who is being stared at — is typically distinguished by its contrast with any form of sight or insight that can possibly be attained from within the *conditio humana*: As a consequence of original sin, mankind has experienced the Fall of Vision and can therefore perceive only 'in a mirror dimly', to cite the famous passage from I Corinthians 13. 12, which sums up medieval notions of human knowledge. From the medieval perspective, fallen vision is indissolubly bound to the temptations of the flesh, rendering human sight a 'fleshly' mode of seeing that needs to be disciplined by perpetual ocular chastity. It is the carnality of human vision that is at the origin of all transgressions against God,[17] represented in the depiction of the seven deadly sins surrounding the figure of Christ as the Man of Sorrows in Bosch's painting. Christ looks at the beholder pointing to the wound in his side, thus marking his death on the cross as the gateway to redemption. The message is clear: Only by following the path set out by Christ can mankind hope to be restored to its original state of innocence and perfection that would allow for an unaltered, absolute 'gaze'.

A whole range of questions arises in view of a painting like the *Table of the Seven Deadly Sins* by Hiëronymus Bosch. For instance, if seeing came to be understood as a way of touching, then did the visual relationship with an image of Christ (here shown in a circle recalling the Host) engender the same bodily participation in the divine as the one established by the visual relationship with the elevated Host? Or, to put the question differently: Can we relate man-made images to the phenomenon of 'sacramental vision?'[18] And further, what conclusions may be drawn from the assumption that seeing entails an affective component actively generated by the perceived object rather than by the subject that merely passively receives and retains these impressions?[19] Does this understanding of the act of seeing allow us to speak of a normative visual culture, designed to exert ethically and politically motivated power over the medieval viewer?

A manuscript illumination belonging to an illustrated copy of a treatise known as *La Sainte Abbaye*, produced in Alsace around 1300, helps refine some of these questions (Figure 1.1).[20] The four scenes on fol. 29ʳ depict the consecutive stages of the soul's mystical ascent to God. The text accompanying

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16 Cf. Lentes, 'Der göttliche Blick', pp. 22–23.

17 Cf. ch. 2 of Biernoff, *Sight and Embodiment*.

18 For a discussion of this phenomenon, cf. Hub's article in this volume.

19 Cf. Biernoff's characterization of the perceptual continuum in Biernoff, *Sight and Embodiment*, pp. 81–84, esp. p. 82.

20 London, British Library, Yates Thompson MS 11. Cf. Kumler, *Translating Truth*, pp. 230–35 and fig. 80; Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, pp. 412–14 and fig. 247; Hamburger, 'The Visual and the Visionary', pp. 174–75 and fig. 12.

FIGURE 1.1. 'Le trois estaz de bones ames', London, British Library, Yates Thompson MS 11, fol. 29r, c. 1300. Reproduced with the permission of the British Library.

the miniature deals with 'the three stages of devout souls' (*Le trois estaz de bones ames*), which are equated with penance, meditation, and contemplation, which finally leads to the soul's mystical union with God. While the first quadrant shows a devout laywoman preparing for meditation by seeking forgiveness for her sins in a scene of confession, the second quadrant, marking the beginning of her meditation, presents her in front of a devotional image, her intense gaze directed straight at the sculpture of the Coronation of the Virgin on the altar before her. In the third sequence, a further stage of her meditation is depicted, marking the beginning of her visionary experience. Here, the woman's gaze is not directed at any specific object; instead, she is shown looking inwardly at the mental images of the Passion, alluded to by the cross held by an angel, which she is explicitly summoned to meditate upon by Christ Crucified, who appears to her uttering the words: 'Look how much I bore for the sake of the life of the people'.[21] The fourth quadrant shows her in mystical rapture, her pose and her facial expression clearly indicating that she is receiving an ecstatic vision. In this final sequence, her half-shut eyes are directed at the Trinitarian Throne of Mercy floating in a cloud in front of her, whose transcendence is emphasized by the architectural setting surrounding it, which not only differs from that used in the rest of the manuscript illumination, but is shown overlapping it as well.

In this miniature, the entire process of mystical ascent is conceived of as a visual experience in the broad medieval sense. Indeed, throughout the Middle Ages, the path leading to God was understood according to the threefold categorization of vision laid out by St Augustine, who had described it as an itinerary beginning with the world without, leading to the world beyond via the world within.[22] The equation of seeing and knowing underlying this system is evidently rooted in the Neoplatonic tradition, in which *theoria* — which in its root sense signifies 'gazing' — is regarded as the means to attaining the highest possible form of knowledge. Repercussions of this basic notion can be traced in the belief that the fulfilment of all human aspirations to 'see' lies in the post-mortem *visio Dei*, the direct gaze into the face of God, which releases the soul from the constraints of imperfect knowing in the passage cited from Corinthians.[23]

Remarkably in the French manuscript illumination, the mystical ascent to God is triggered by a material image, a painted sculpture. Even the references

21 Translation taken from Kumler, *Translating Truth*, p. 233. My interpretation of the two last scenes in particular departs from that proposed by Kumler. I understand the tree with red and green leaves in the third quadrant as an allusion to the salvific, 'life-giving' power of Christ's sacrifice which the woman is summoned to ponder upon. The meditative recreation of events of the passion was understood as an integral part of the mystical ascent to God in devotional practice. Cf. Preisinger, *'Lignum vitae'*.

22 Aurelius Augustinus, *De genesi ad litteram libri duodecim*, Liber xii, ed. by Migne, cols 453–86; St Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, trans. by Taylor, ii, 178–231.

23 Cf. Armstrong, 'Gottesschau (Visio beatifica)'.

to God's otherworldly existence clearly cite contemporary works of art, as Christ is shown as the Man of Sorrows in the third quadrant, and the Trinity as the Throne of Mercy in the fourth. While sensory perception played only a marginal role in the process of cognition as it was described by St Augustine, by the later Middle Ages, it was regarded as fundamental to the soul's journey to God.[24] Paralleling this, medieval devotional practice accorded works of art increasing importance: man-made images were even considered an ideal vehicle for the mystical ascent by the later medieval period.[25] It is particularly noteworthy that the Coronation of the Virgin, which is at the basis of the whole process, is depicted on an altar, while the blood dropping out of Christ's wounds in the third and fourth quadrants surprisingly flows into a real-world chalice. While the allusion to Eucharistic miracles, which are known to have played an important role in female mysticism in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, is evident, it is important to note that here, Eucharistic transformation is triggered by remembrance of the Passion, described in terms of a visual process.

The questions arising from such iconographical details bear on the characterization of late medieval piety as 'visual piety', an issue explicitly taken up by Berthold Hub. From his examination of theories of vision in the Middle Ages, Hub concludes that the extramission theory of vision continued predominating, particularly among the uneducated population, a point which is fundamental to the discussion of whether a shift in theories of vision led to the emergence of linear perspective in the Renaissance.[26]

Following Hub's foundational article, which provides a theoretical base to the subsequent discussion of artworks, two essays provide large synthetic readings of distinct aesthetic traditions which touch upon the apprehension of images and the visual. Wendy Shaw proposes an interpretation of Islamic sanctions on both the image and the veil that is based on the theorization of visuality in the discourse of classical Islam. By favouring discursive parameters over doctrinal or disciplinary ones, an alternative view on Islamic visuality emerges, one that resonates in many ways with Western medieval conceptions of the image. Jens Rüffer describes the early Cistercians' contribution to the field of the visual as a 'negative aesthetics' meant to facilitate the spiritual ascent to God: Only by protecting the soul from the dangers arising from the exterior senses is it possible to reach the apex of vision. He demonstrates how the architectural monuments of the early Cistercians contributed to their 'material policy' of warding off the dangers represented by sense perception.

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24   Cf. Hamburger's seminal article on the shifting interpretation of Romans 1. 20: Hamburger, 'Speculations on Speculation'.

25   Cf. Hamburger, 'The Visual and the Visionary', esp. p. 170.

26   This discussion was revived in 2008 with Hans Belting's *Florenz und Bagdad*.

The next group of essays focuses on different aspects of the staging of the divine. Bissera Pentcheva's investigation into the 'methexic' qualities of medieval cult images, that is, their participatory aspects with regard to the Divine, stresses the materiality of artworks and the multisensorial perception they address, while highlighting the essential role attributed specifically to vision. In her article for the present volume, she extends the phenomenological approach she previously adopted for the analysis of Byzantine mixed-media relief icons to the Western golden *imagines* of the Middle Ages. Pentcheva describes the capacity of the material 'flux' — presence effects obtained by glitter, shadow, and reverberation — to animate medieval images. Silke Tammen moves beyond the description of the spellbound viewing resulting from the effect of radiance produced through the materiality of artworks by analysing an intimate gaze grounded in materiality, which is channelled towards the interior of the heart. By concentrating on two late medieval cope morses, Tammen is able to unfurl the complicated allusions to different levels of vision — the beholder's gaze, 'outer vision', and 'inner vision' — potentially inherent in the wearing of late medieval jewellery.

Cynthia Hahn's and Tina Bawden's essays provide a close analysis of how material artefacts channel the viewer's gaze. Hahn undertakes an analysis of medieval reliquaries and complicates the widespread understanding that, from the thirteenth century onwards, relics were subject to increased visibility. She shows that, instead of aiming to offer an unimpeded vision of relics, reliquaries stage the relics in particular ways, which often entail visual restrictions and strive to create an experience of the divine by means of a process she labels the 'vision effect'. This process begins with corporeal sight but transcends it by involving the entire body and the soul — the perception of sacred matter in the form of a relic, mediated by the reliquary, thus only seemingly privileges sight. The interplay between intimacy and distance in the experience of the sacred is also the subject of Bawden's essay. Bawden undertakes a thorough analysis of so-called 'elevation squints', that is, small apertures inserted into wooden screens, which are particular to late medieval parish churches in England and Wales. After a careful consideration of the terminology, material evidence, and contexts relating to the squints, she points out the ways in which these openings have consequences for the devotees' acts of seeing, allowing us 'to grasp, to a certain extent, the relationship between medieval vision and medieval visuality'. As seeing through a squint requires a kneeling position, these openings, which channel sight in materially mediated ways to allow for a customized view of the sacred, reveal the necessity to consider sight in conjunction with the position of the devotee's body.

Taken as a whole, the articles in this volume confirm that, especially from the thirteenth century onwards, among the senses, sight was the primary means of approaching God and was therefore crucial to medieval society. What was being seen and how it was being viewed came under growing scrutiny precisely because sight attained such decisive importance. Even though there certainly is 'no simple correspondence between the history of

visual art and the history of vision',[27] the essays in this volume, which take into account the materiality of medieval artworks and multisensorial aspects in their reception, demonstrate how crucial it is to emphasize visuality in the analysis of art and artefacts even after the 'material turn'.

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27   Biernoff, *Sight and Embodiment*, p. 3.

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BERTHOLD HUB

'Visual Piety' and Visual Theory

Was There a Paradigm Shift?

'Visual Piety'

It was Ildefons Herwegen, a German historian and Abbot of Maria Laach on the Rhine, who was the first to characterize late medieval 'Gothic' piety as 'visual piety' (*Schaufrömmigkeit*).[1] In the late Middle Ages, according to Herwegen, 'looking' (*schauen*) became an independent moment of action during the performance of the liturgy and devotion. In his view, this was evident from the large number of liturgical and non-liturgical ceremonies that developed in the late Middle Ages to satisfy this need for visual contact with sanctifying objects. Herwegen included among these the elevation of the Host, Corpus Christ processions, the exhibition of relics, the opening of reliquaries through the use of glass, and the showing of relics and the Host in specially made display vessels, ostensories and monstrances.[2] All of these elements, in his view, were expressions of a fundamentally homogeneous phenomenon: 'visual piety'.

Herwegen's approach was adopted by his student, the ethnologist and liturgical historian Anton Mayer, and extended into a more systematic concept. His essay on 'the sanctifying gaze (*heilbringende Schau*) in customs and worship' characterized 'faith in the redeeming effect of the gaze or look' as a belief that is found in every culture and in every historical period.[3] Accordingly, 'visual devotion' (*Schaudevotion*) and 'visual yearning' (*Schausehnsucht*) had in no sense been evoked by 'the Church', but had their real origin in the 'psyche' of the 'people' or the 'masses'. Visual devotion, finally, had arisen in the late Middle Ages 'from outside and from below' to become a 'cult-forming and piety-changing factor'. Alongside the 'mystical gaze' (*mystische Schau*) as a

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1 Herwegen, *Kirche und Seele*.
2 Herwegen, *Kirche und Seele*, p. 18.
3 Mayer, 'Die heilbringende Schau in Sitte und Kult', pp. 236–41. Cf. the lucid critical discussion of Mayer in Kühne, *Ostensio Reliquiarum*, pp. 513–19 and 814–32.

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non-sensory vision of a revelation and the 'mystery gaze' (*Mysterienschau*) as 'a physical gaze *per mysterium*' in which what is looked at is transcended towards something non-sensory, a 'purely physical gaze' came to the fore. This phenomenon, discussed by Mayer under the heading of 'the sanctifying gaze' (*heilbringende Schau*), is — in contrast to the two other forms of gaze — defined by an absence of any cognitive or spiritual implementation of what is seen; 'what is involved is merely the simplest, most primitive creation of a sensory connection with the object and faith in its effect, in the blessing and power of this sensory human connection'.[4] This type of purely physical gaze must be described as 'magical', since the seeing was no longer concerned with communication between the (sanctifying) object and the seeing subject, but with a sanctifying automatism (*Heilsautomatismus*) *ex opere operato* — that is, simply looking at the sanctifying matter. The purpose of the pious act had become the 'gaze' itself and exclusively.

According to Mayer, this 'sanctifying gaze' was directed in particular at three different groups of objects — relics, the Host, and images — which were all regarded as being situated 'subjectively at more or less the same level'.[5] This led in particular to 'interrelationships arising between looking at images and looking at the Eucharist'.[6]

Initially, the 'need to gaze' (*Schauverlangen*) had been directed at the elevation of the Host during Mass — that is, at the moment in which the priest takes the Host in his hands, raises it above his head to expose it to view, and speaks the words of consecration.[7] Evidence of the receptive attitude of 'visual devotion' postulated by Mayer can indeed be found most convincingly in the elevation of the Host during the liturgy of the Mass, which is first attested to around 1200.[8] Numerous sources confirm that for many people, 'going to Mass' meant solely going to church for the sake of the transubstantiation and seeing the Host elevated.[9] Although this practice was criticized by the clergy, it was also encouraged by them through the promise of gifts of grace for this 'visio corporis Christi'. These 'merita missae' included, for example, protection from 'sudden death' and also preservation from carelessly spoken oaths, or preservation of the eyesight.[10]

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4   Mayer, 'Die heilbringende Schau in Sitte und Kult', pp. 235–36.
5   Mayer, 'Die heilbringende Schau in Sitte und Kult', p. 250.
6   Mayer, 'Die heilbringende Schau in Sitte und Kult', p. 253; cf. p. 254.
7   Mayer, 'Die heilbringende Schau in Sitte und Kult', pp. 255–60.
8   On the history of the elevation and its form, see in particular Dumoutet, *Le Désir de voir l'hostie*, particularly pp. 37–74; Browe, 'Die Elevation in der Messe'; Jungmann, *Missarum Sollemnia*, i, 149–56, ii, 245–63; Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, pp. 49–82. Cf. also Franz, *Die Messe im deutschen Mittelalter*, pp. 32–33 and 100–105. On the transference of pious practices and expectations from relics to the Host, which cannot be discussed here in greater detail, see Snoek, *Medieval Piety from Relics to the Eucharist*.
9   Cf. also Trexler, *The Spiritual Power*, pp. 124–27. For a popular story about this practice in fifteenth-century Florence, see Piovano Arlotto, *Motti e facezie*, ed. by Folena, pp. 81–82.
10 See, for example, Franz, *Die kirchlichen Benediktionen im Mittelalter*, i, 101–04.

According to Mayer, this behaviour and the associated expectations of the Host had ultimately been transferred to images, as the example of the image of St Christopher showed.[11] Mayer based his discussion on a study by Hans Friedrich Rosenfeld in which the spread and reasons for the use of this specific motif were investigated and a connection was postulated between its massive occurrence starting in the thirteenth century and the liturgical practice of elevating the Host.[12] The idea that seeing the Christ child on the shoulder of St Christopher was able to provide protection against 'mala mors' — death unattended by a sacrament — does in fact appear to be directly dependent on the belief that seeing the consecrated Host could have the same effect. The image can be regarded as an iconographic implementation of the Host contained in the monstrance. Numerous recent studies have confirmed this connection.[13]

This conception of 'visual piety' (*Schaufrömmigkeit*) or of the 'sanctifying gaze' (*heilbringende Schau*) suggested by Herwegen and developed by Mayer has been widely accepted, particularly in German-language art-historical scholarship, and is still regarded by many as a satisfactory explanatory model for various phenomena involved in late medieval 'piety'.[14] The term 'visual piety' is still used to justify the equation of gazing on relics, gazing on the Host, and gazing on images, and the interpretation of these as magical practices — even though for Mayer the magical element lay more in the irrational, compelling quality of an action whose effect took place *ex opere operato*. For more recent authors, by contrast, it is not the action itself that lies in the foreground, but rather the ideas underlying it about powers acting in the objects concerned, the effective presence or 'real presence' (*Realpräsenz*) of the persons depicted.

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11   Mayer, 'Die heilbringende Schau in Sitte und Kult', pp. 250–55.

12   Rosenfeld, *Der heilige Christophorus*, esp. pp. 418–27.

13   Hahn-Woernle, *Christophorus in der Schweiz*; Rigaux, 'Usages apotropaïques de la fresque', esp. pp. 322–27; Boscani Leoni, *Essor et fonctions des images religieuses dans les Alpes*, esp. pp. 452–58 and 486–93. One may recall here the numerous depictions of the mass of St Gregory in which, in painting and sculpture, the Host and the body of Christ are identified by having the raised Host placed in front of the depiction of the crucified Christ relative to the viewer of the image, or for viewers within the image. On this point, see most recently Gormans, *Das Bild der Erscheinung*. Cf. also Van Ausdall, 'Communicating with the Host'. Van Ausdall's hypothesis is that not only the crucifix but also numerous other depictions of the body of Christ need to be seen in the context of the veneration and viewing of the Host — as a kind of substitute Host: visible from further away and at any time, such depictions would create the same salvific contact between the viewer and the body of Christ.

14   See e.g. Dinzelbacher, 'Die "Realpräsenz" der Heiligen in ihren Reliquiaren und Gräbern nach mittelalterlichen Quellen', esp. pp. 135–46; Angenendt, *Heilige und Reliquien*, esp. pp. 158–62; Wenzel, *Sehen und Hören, Schrift und Bild*, pp. 99–104; Diedrichs, *Vom Glauben zum Sehen*, esp. pp. 149–57 and 203–35.

'Sacramental Gaze'

The position taken by Mayer and his successors has been given an interesting turn by numerous contributions to the discussion by Robert Scribner.[15] A historian of the Reformation in Germany, Scribner drew a distinction for the first time in 1989 between three different types of images and three correspondingly different modes of gazing.[16] 'Didactic images' served 'to teach the unlearned, stirred people to devotion and assisted when memory failed'. By contrast, the 'mystical image', whether viewed with the outward eye or imagined with the inward eye, led 'during pious devotion […] from a purely pictorial gaze […] through a pictorial mental gaze to imageless devotion'. However, since this high goal of 'imageless devotion' must remain unachievable for most people, a third 'way for human beings to grasp the sacred' arose in which the gaze 'represented an essential moment of devotion' — the 'sacramental gaze' (*sacramentale Schau*) in contrast to the 'mystical gaze' and 'didactic gaze'. Following on from these distinctions, Scribner confirmed the 'visual yearning' (*Schausehnsucht*) diagnosed by Mayer and approvingly summarizes his distinction between the 'mystical gaze', 'mystery gaze', and 'purely physical gaze' and his interpretation of the purely physical gaze as a 'magical action'.[17] However, Scribner proposes that the concept of 'magical action' should be replaced with a new term describing the phenomenon more accurately:

> However, the description 'sacramental action' (*sakramentale Handlung*) is better, on analogy with the action taking place during the sacramental rites, the effect of which depended on the believer's pious attitude. In this case, gazing at images or worship of images hardly differed here from the sacramental gaze that occurred during the liturgy. In the case of images of saints, the gaze involved perception of the sacred person himself, an encounter with the revered figure. This explains the close connection between image worship and visions: in response to the devotion of the person praying, the figure to whom the prayer is addressed actually appears. This involves a cognitive relationship in which what is described by the prayer that has been offered becomes reality.[18]

There was of course also a view of the gaze as a 'magical action', but this was a false interpretation of contemplation of the image, whereas regarding it as a 'sacramental action' was the correct one. In both types of 'sacramental

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15 See in particular Scribner, 'Popular Piety and Modes of Visual Perception'; and Scribner, 'Das Visuelle in der Volksfrömmigkeit'. Cf. Scribner, 'Zur Wahrnehmung des Heiligen in Deutschland'; Scribner, 'Vom Sakralbild zur sinnlichen Schau'; Scribner, 'Ways of Seeing in the Age of Dürer'.

16 Scribner, 'Das Visuelle in der Volksfrömmigkeit', pp. 10–11.

17 Scribner, 'Das Visuelle in der Volksfrömmigkeit', pp. 12–14.

18 Scribner, 'Das Visuelle in der Volksfrömmigkeit', p. 16.

gaze', vision was an essential component of the efficacy of the action, but in the latter case it is

> not automatically effective, and like the sacramental rites depended on the pious attitude of the person praying. The same ambivalence is certainly found here as in the sacramental rites: from a theological point of view, the sacramental rites were not effective *ex opere operato*, but in popular pious usage they were regarded as being automatically effective, as if they were actually sacraments.[19]

According to Scribner, this 'sacramental gaze', characteristic of medieval piety, came to an abrupt end with the advent of linear perspective and the Reformation, as a result of which the viewer was distanced from the content of the image and the image was only considered to offer instructional and symbolic guidance.[20]

Like Mayer's concept of 'visual piety', Scribner's concept of the 'sacramental gaze' influenced numerous successors.[21] In the meantime, however, both models have come under criticism in several respects. Norbert Schnitzler, for example, rightly objected to the totalitarian explanatory claims implicit in the concept of 'visual piety'. Numerous more recent studies, Schnitzler noted, had provided evidence of the 'coexistence of fundamentally different views and perceptions' that made it impermissible to speak of a generally widespread 'visual devotion' as a universal key to the late medieval production and reception of images.[22]

'Visual Piety' and Visual Theory

Turning now to the aspect that is of interest in the present context: surprisingly, despite the extensive discussion of the gaze, vision, and sight, there is no mention at all of any theories of vision — that is, of contemporary conceptions

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19 Scribner, 'Das Visuelle in der Volksfrömmigkeit', p. 17.

20 Scribner, 'Popular Piety and Modes of Visual Perception', p. 464.

21 See e.g. Lentes, 'Inneres Auge, äußerer Blick und heilige Schau', esp. pp. 208–09; Marchal, 'Bildersturm im Mittelalter', esp. pp. 262–65; Diedrichs, 'Terribilis est locus iste', esp. pp. 268–69.

22 Schnitzler, 'Illusion, Täuschung und schöner Schein', pp. 221–27. A similar position is taken by Lentes, 'Soweit das Auge reicht'. Schnitzler draws attention in particular to studies by Jeffrey Hamburger. However, Hamburger — who himself does not criticize the concept of 'visual piety' or the 'sacramental gaze' — during a discussion of the significance and function of what are known as *verae icones* or Veronica images also concludes that 'Images of the Veronica may have substituted for the Host, supplying a surrogate sacramental presence'. See Hamburger, 'Vision and the Veronica', esp. p. 345. Additional critical discussions of the concept of 'visual piety' can be found, for example, in Kühne, *Ostensio Reliquiarum*, pp. 513–19 and 814–32; Hamm, 'Normative Zentrierung im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert', esp. pp. 39–40; Signori, 'Das spätmittelalterliche Gnadenbild', esp. pp. 303–04.

of the visual process — among the critics of the concepts of 'visual piety' and the 'sacramental gaze'; equally, they are also mentioned only rarely among the defenders of these concepts. If the theory of vision is mentioned at all on either side, it is usually only with a general and quite vague reference to the survey by David Lindberg, with no effort to look for a more precise justification there of what is being claimed in each case.[23] Ancient or medieval authors are also mentioned occasionally, but they are rarely quoted. In brief, the sources for what is in my view the central question for the validity of these concepts, the question of the theory of vision — that is, the question of the underlying ideas about the visual process itself — are not discussed.

Scribner, for example, regards his 'sacramental gaze' as being based on contemporary theories of vision, but he presents these in a quite unsatisfactory way and is unable to decide whether he should regard the extramission theory or the intromission theory of vision as being responsible — as if their implications were interchangeable:

> The possibility of the 'sacramental gaze' […] rested on certain assumptions about the physical act of seeing which were common currency during the Middle Ages. An older theory of vision regarded it as a substance transmitted between the viewer and the viewed object, the chief difference being between those who regarded this as emanating from the object viewed and those who regarded it as emanating from the viewer, whose eye could almost be thought to 'feel' the viewed object. These views were challenged by forms of 'mediumistic' theories, principally those of Aristotle and Galen [sic], which emphasized the medium through which visual contact occurred. During the thirteenth century these mediumistic theories were refined by the ideas propounded by Albertus Magnus and Roger Bacon, which emphasized the dependence of the act of seeing on the transmission of light rays. However, no single theory of vision gained complete dominance. […] At a popular level, it remained possible to understand seeing as a form of direct personal contact with the viewed object, either 'feeling' it, being 'touched' by it, or even experiencing a stream of rays emanating from it.[24]

Scholars following on from Scribner also remain undecided,[25] or like Guy Marchal and Christoph Diedrichs they concretize Scribner's approach in terms of the extramission theory — but also quite inadequately.[26] Cynthia

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23 Lindberg, *Theories of Vision*, pp. 1–17.

24 Scribner, 'Popular Piety and Modes of Visual Perception', pp. 463–64. The only reference for the whole passage is to Lindberg, *Theories of Vision*, pp. 338–68. A closer reading of Lindberg would already have shown that Aristotle and Galen cannot possibly be lumped together. Cf. my discussion of Galen and Aristotle below.

25 For example, Lentes, 'Inneres Auge, äußerer Blick und heilige Schau', pp. 208–09. Cf. Jung, 'The Tactile and the Visionary', esp. p. 207.

26 Marchal, 'Bildersturm im Mittelalter', pp. 262–63; Diedrichs, 'Terribilis est locus iste', p. 269.

Hahn and Margaret R. Miles take a similar approach, but without referring to Scribner.[27] Silke Tammen considers in turn that influences of both the extramission theory and the intromission theory were present.[28] While the former had been decisive up to the twelfth century and had attributed 'a haptic quality' to the gaze, which 'positively palpated the surface of the object being viewed',[29] the latter had become increasingly dominant from the thirteenth century onward and had played the decisive role: 'The intromission theory', she argues, may have 'promoted the increased production of images, with a shift towards more devotional images'; it was 'fruitfully linked' to the old concept of 'the inscription or sealing of the inner human being […] and intensified the view of an almost vulnerable sensitivity of the eye (particularly the female eye, as well as the eye of a person who was praying) to visual impressions'.[30] Tammen is above all following Michael Camille here, who considered that the 'image explosion of the later Middle Ages',[31] the 'new range of powerful types of religious images', and 'the hypersensitivity of the perceiving subject' were explained by a shift from the extramission theory to the intromission theory of vision.[32] Finally, there has been no lack of efforts to link iconographic details or materials with the intromission theory of vision. According to Samuel Edgerton, for example, Fra Filippo Lippi in his *Annunciation* (*c.* 1455; London, National Gallery) was inspired by Roger Bacon's intromission theory of vision to present the Immaculate Conception as an emanation of divine grace; the series of golden rings and sprays of golden dots descending with the Holy Spirit is interpreted as representing 'species'.[33] Amy Bloch, in turn, regarded Donatello's *Madonna Chellini* of 1456, or the glass copy commissioned by

27   Hahn, 'Visio Dei', esp. pp. 174–75; Miles, *A Complex Delight*, pp. 8–9.

28   Tammen, 'Wahrnehmung, Sehen und Bildwahrnehmung im Mittelalter'. Cf. Biernoff, *Sight and Embodiment*, according to which the medieval 'carnal' way of seeing is informed by 'the ambiguities of thirteenth-century perspectiva, including the mutual "gaze" of subject and object that results from Bacon's synthesis of intromission and extramission' (p. 149).

29   Tammen, 'Wahrnehmung, Sehen und Bildwahrnehmung im Mittelalter', p. 478.

30   Tammen, 'Wahrnehmung, Sehen und Bildwahrnehmung im Mittelalter', pp. 476–77. It may be worth mentioning here that the most influential representative of an 'inscription or sealing of the inner human being' was Augustine, who was also an advocate of the extramission theory of vision. See e.g. Miles, 'Vision'; cf. Park, 'Impressed Images'. Cf. also the wholly careless essay by Joby, 'The Extent to which the Rise in the Worship of Images in the Late Middle Ages was Influenced by Contemporary Theories of Vision', which makes both the extramission and intromission theories of vision responsible for the emergence of heretical image-worship.

31   Camille, *The Gothic Idol*, p. 219.

32   Camille, 'Before the Gaze', esp. pp. 204–09. Cf. also Camille, *Gothic Art*, pp. 16–25. There is unfortunately insufficient space here to discuss Camille's extremely questionable hypotheses. Following Camille, e.g. Leibacher Ward, 'Who Sees Christ?', esp. pp. 377–78. Cf. also Wandel, 'The Reform of Images', esp. pp. 106–08; and Timmermann, *Real Presence*, pp. 3–4.

33   Edgerton, '"How Shall This Be?"' (and with slight changes in Edgerton, *The Heritage of Giotto's Geometry*, pp. 92–107).

the work's patron (both in the Victoria & Albert Museum, London), as an instrument of intromissive sanctifying action, analogous with the process occurring when the Host is seen.[34]

The references to theories of vision that can be found in art-historical literature are in any case insufficient to document what is intended to be documented here. They are often also simply incorrect, or at least misleading.[35] The last-mentioned writer, Amy Bloch, may serve as an example. Having presented adequately neither Plato's theory of vision nor that of Aristotle, Bloch concludes that 'although differing in their ideas about how vision happens, both Plato and Aristotle believed that the visual process leads to the establishment of a physical connection between the object seen and the eye'.[36] But Plato and Aristotle represent antipodes in the field of visual theory. Aristotle was in fact the only ancient author who explicitly opposed any form of physical contact. But this is not all. The patron, Giovanni Chellini, had according to Bloch acquired his knowledge of the intromission theory from 'medical treatises by Galen, Avicenna, and Johannitius, all of whom were represented in Chellini's library'.[37] There is no sense in which Galen and Johannitius can be claimed for the intromission theory of vision; instead, they are both clear defenders of the extramission theory (whereas Avicenna remains undecided in his medical writings) — a point to which we shall return.

The aim of the following discussion is to remedy this state of affairs in art history and to provide a more solid basis for future studies on the connection between sight and the production and reception of art in the Middle Ages. For this purpose, it will be necessary initially to turn to the ancient theories of vision, in which the extramission theory — the idea that there is a material visual ray that emanates from the eye and touches the object being viewed — predominated. We then turn to medieval authors. The ancient extramission theory undoubtedly continued to predominate uninterruptedly here initially, until the twelfth century. It was only in the thirteenth century that the Arabic-Aristotelian intromission theory of vision, according to which the eye is only the passive recipient of light rays, made inroads into the Latin West.

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34   Bloch, 'Donatello's Chellini Madonna, Light, and Vision', esp. pp. 78–79. Surprisingly, none of the authors mentioned above support their arguments for the influence of the intromission theory on the production and reception of images with the help of Bonaventura, who develops an entire pictorial theology with the aid of the intromission theory. See Wolff, 'Das kreative Bild' (I am grateful to Ruth Wolff for generously permitting me to read her manuscript). And Camille alone refers at one point ('Before the Gaze', p. 209) to John Wyclif's doctrine of the Eucharist — although without going into it in any greater detail. Wyclif explains the mediation of salvation during the viewing of the Host using the perspectivists' species theory: the Host, it is argued, functions like a mirror in which the species of the body of Christ is reflected towards the viewer. See Phillips, 'John Wyclif and the Optics of the Eucharist'.

35   Cf. for example Timmermann, *Real Presence*, p. 3, who simply identifies the perspectivists' 'species' with the 'atoms' of the ancient atomists.

36   Bloch, 'Donatello's Chellini Madonna, Light, and Vision', p. 76.

37   Bloch, 'Donatello's Chellini Madonna, Light, and Vision', p. 80.

But did this mean that a paradigm shift took place? We shall present three arguments against the view that a paradigm shift of this type occurred and in favour of the continued predominance of the extramission theory, particularly among the uneducated population. Initially, it will be necessary to show (1) that the optical theories represented by those known as the perspectivists during the thirteenth century did not completely dismiss the extramission theory; instead, they represented a combination of intromission and extramission that continued to permit a resort to the hypothesis of a material visual ray emanating from the eye in order to explain and uphold generally recognized phenomena such as the evil eye, the gaze of love, or infection with diseases via the gaze. (2) On the basis of the visual theories that were used by physicians, and particularly by oculists, an example of the continued existence of the pure (Galenic) extramission theory of vision, at the intersection between natural science and popular belief, is then presented. (3) Finally, it is necessary to emphasize the fact that the inventors of linear perspective in the fifteenth century not only show no signs whatsoever that the perspectivists and their new intromissive paradigm were a prerequisite for their invention, but on the contrary even provide positive evidence for the survival of the hypothesis of extramission among artists.

Ancient Theories of Vision

Theories of vision in antiquity can be broadly divided into two categories — those of intromission and extramission. The first group of theories assumes that ultrafine layers of atoms, of material images are emitted — like copies or reproductions — from the surfaces of all objects and are released as if in thin coats, which flow to the eyes of the beholder and are absorbed by them. This conception is assumed in Democritus, Epicurus, Lucretius, and other representatives of the atomistic philosophy. The second group of theories assumes that there are material rays which, conversely, emanate from the eyes and meet the objects in the field of vision. Theories of this type include not only the visual-ray cone of mathematicians such as Euclid and Ptolemy, but also the fiery rays of the Pythagoreans, Plato's *synaugeia* (radiating together) of inward and outward fire, and the visual ray consisting of a mixture of pneuma and air in the Stoic tradition, which was adopted by Galen's school of medicine.[38]

Plato's most detailed presentation of his conception of vision is in the *Timaeus*:

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38   On theories of vision in antiquity in general, see Lindberg, *Theories of Vision*, pp. 1–17; Simon, *Le Regard, l'être et l'apparence dans l'optique*; and Hub, *Die Perspektive der Antike*, pp. 264–321, with detailed bibliography.

And of the organs they [the Gods] constructed first light-bearing eyes, and these they fixed in the face for the reason following. They contrived that all such fire as had the property not of burning but of giving a mild light should form a body akin to the light of every day. For they caused the pure fire within us, which is akin to that of day, to flow through the eyes in a smooth and dense stream. […] So whenever the stream of vision is surrounded by mid-day light, it flows out like unto like, and coalescing therewith it forms one kindred substance along the path of the eye's vision, wheresoever the fire which streams from within collides with an obstructing object without. And this substance, having all become similar in its properties because of its similar nature, distributes the motions of every object it touches, or whereby it is touched, throughout all the body even unto the Soul, and brings about that sensation which we now term 'seeing'.[39]

The Stoic-Galenic theory of vision expands this concept in accordance with the Stoic theory of *pneuma*, an omnipresent principle of vitality that consists of a mixture of air and fire. Vision occurs when the *visual pneuma* (πνεῦμα ὅρᾱτικόν) originating in the spirit's central organ, the ἡγεμονικόν (located in the heart) — or (in Galen) the *spiritus visibilis*, which is refined in the brain — flows into the eye, emerges through the pupil out of the eye, and sets the air lying between the pupil and the object in a state of 'tension'. As a result of this tension, the air takes on the shape of a cone with its tip located in the pupil and its base set on the body that is being seen. In this way, the eye touches bodies via the tensed air, as if with a feeler or antenna, and receives back the shape of the object that has been impressed on it.[40]

In the context discussed here, two central aspects of these visual theories are important: Firstly, they assume that vision is a haptic process — that is, that vision requires physical contact between the viewer and the object being viewed. Extramission and intromission theories differ in this respect only in the way in which they answer the question of which side the movement leading to physical contact starts from. The fact that physical contact is involved is immediately evident in the atomistic view, which presupposes the existence of an atomic and thus material duplicate of the objects that meet the eye without changing their order. However, the extramission theory also suggests physical contact. The visual ray, streaming out from the eyes, is of a material nature, extends spatially, continues in straight lines, and is reflected or deflected by an obstacle such as a mirror, or interrupted or refracted by an obstacle such as water. These are all characteristics that can only apply to

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39   Plato, *Timaeus*, 45b–d, trans. by Bury, pp. 100–103. Plato does not use the term συναυγεία himself. The first to use the term to describe Platonic visual theory appears to be the Greek doxographer Aetius, *Placita philosophorum*, iv. 13. 11, ed. by Diels, p. 404.

40   Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De anima libri mantissa*, § 10 ('Against those who explain seeing through the tension of the air'), ed. by Sharples, pp. 72–77. More on Galen follows below.

a physical object. When the reflection of the visual ray is compared with the rebounding of a missile, as it was from Heron of Alexandria to Ptolemy, then it must certainly be taken literally.[41]

Secondly, this visual ray emitted by the eye is not only of a material nature, but is also equipped with sensitivity, with sensory, that is, physically perceptive, faculties — and thus with sensation that takes place outside the body. The expression 'outside the body' is not strictly accurate, however, as the visual ray can only be regarded as a kind of excrescence from the body, an ephemeral organ that is capable of feeling the objects in the visual field even at the greatest distance and in their maximum extension.

Thus, as early as Hipparchus, there is an explicit comparison with the hand: the ends of the rays emitted by the eyes touch the bodies in the external world in the way that hands do, and then return to the eye.[42] The Pseudo-Aristotelian *Problemata* declare that 'what is seen is seen by contact with the visual ray'.[43] Apuleius reports the assumption by the philosophers that 'our visual rays […] as soon as they fall on a solid, shining and smooth body, spring back at the same angle that they enter to the face from which they emanated, and in this way depict what they touch and see externally within the mirror'.[44] Ptolemy also explicitly compares the visual ray to the hand:

> objects are apprehended (as) concave by means of the surfaces of convex bases (defined by impinging visual rays), whereas objects are apprehended (as convex) by means of the surfaces of concave bases, just as such objects are perceived by touch, convex ones being apprehended through the concavity of the encircling hand, and concave ones being apprehended through the convexity of the encircled hand.[45]

Seeing with the eyes differed from touching with the hands only with respect to the perception of colours.[46] The Stoics had already previously claimed that through the visual cone, one could see 'in the same way in which one feels with a stick'.[47] Galen criticizes this comparison — not because he rejects

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41 Heron of Alexandria, *Catoptrics*, 2–3; *A Source Book in Greek Science*, ed. by Cohen and Drabkin, pp. 263–64. Ptolemy, *Optics*, ii. 20 and iii. 19, also iii. 22–64; Smith, *Ptolemy's Theory of Visual Perception*, pp. 78, 139, 140–53. Cf. also Pseudo-Aristotle, *Problemata*, xvi. 13; Aristotle, *Problems*, trans. by Mayhew, p. 501.

42 Aetius, *Placita philosophorum*, iv. 13. 9, ed. by Diels, p. 404.

43 Pseudo-Aristotle, *Problemata*, iii. 10; Aristotle, *Problems*, trans. by Mayhew, p. 109: 'with sight'; translation corrected, since ὄψις is used throughout the *Problemata* in the sense of gaze or visual ray. See below, note 55. Cf. Brunschwig, 'Sur quelques emplois d'ΟΨΙΣ'.

44 Apuleius of Madauros, *Apologia*, 15, ed. by Hunink, i, 47; my translation. Cf. Ptolemy, *Optics*, iii. 3; Smith, *Ptolemy's Theory of Visual Perception*, p. 131. Cf. Pseudo-Aristotle, *Problemata*, xvi. 13: Aristotle, *Problems*, trans. by Mayhew, pp. 498–501; Seneca, *Naturales Quaestiones*, i. 13. 2 and i. 15. 7: Seneca, *Natural Questions*, trans. by Corcoran, pp. 71 and 81.

45 Ptolemy, *Optics*, ii. 67; Smith, *Ptolemy's Theory of Visual Perception*, p. 99.

46 Ptolemy, *Optics*, ii. 13; Smith, *Ptolemy's Theory of Visual Perception*, p. 75.

47 Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De anima libri mantissa*, § 10, 131, ed. by Sharples. p. 74.

the idea of physical contact, however, but rather because he considers the comparison too 'wooden'.[48] The error in the comparison lies in the fact that walking-sticks only communicate counterpressure to the hand, 'whereas sight reaches out through the intervening air to the coloured body', which 'is seen in the place where it actually is'.[49] Galen explicitly makes no distinction here between the visual ray and other physical nerves. According to him, the 'homogeneous part that forms one body with itself', formed from pneuma and air, 'becomes for us the kind of instrument that the nerve in the body is at all times'.[50] This means that the mixture of pneuma and air is for us a tool of perception of visible objects of the same type that the nerves are for palpable objects. What is obvious in the latter case must therefore also apply to the visual rays: sensation takes place in the individual parts and not in the soul, since 'the pain would not be felt in the part of the body that is cut or crushed or burned if the power of sensation were not also present in the parts'.[51]

The only ancient theorist of vision who departs from this view, according to which vision is to be explained by contact through a physical radiation between the eye and the object, in either one direction or the other, is Aristotle. In *De Anima* and *De Sensu*, in a polemical debate with the views of Democritus, Empedocles, and Plato, he rejects every materialistic conception of the perceptual process and explicitly denies that vision can be based on an emanation (of fire, light, or atoms) from or to the eye.[52] Instead, he claims that the process that triggers perception consists solely of a mediation of the colours of an object to the eye through the intervening medium. He is therefore closest to our modern conception of vision. However, just as the theory based on the reception of material doubles that emanate from the object remained restricted — with few exceptions — to a single school, that of the atomists, so this Aristotelian theory remained without adherents,

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Cf. Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae et sententiae philosophorum*, vii. 157: Diogenes Laertius, *Leben und Meinungen berühmter Philosophen*, trans. by Apelt, ii, 80; Plotinus, *The Enneads*, iv. 5. 4, trans. by MacKenna, p. 332. Cf. *Enneads*, iv. 6. 1, p. 338: 'In any perception we attain by sight, the object is grasped there where it lies in the direct line of vision; it is there that we attack it; there, then, the perception is formed'.

48 Galen, *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*, vii. 5 and 7; Galen, *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*, ed. by De Lacy, ii, 461 and 475.

49 Galen, *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*, vii. 5; Galen, *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*, ed. by De Lacy, ii, 461.

50 Galen, *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*, vii. 5; Galen, *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*, ed. by De Lacy, ii, 455. Ibid., p. 461: 'The air becomes for the eye the same kind of instrument for the proper discrimination of its sense-objects, as the nerve is for the brain; therefore, as the brain is to the nerve, so the eye is to the air'; vii. 7, p. 473: 'the air is for us the same kind of instrument for discerning visible things as the nerve is for tangible things'. Cf. Tideus, *De speculis*, ed. by Björnbo and Vogl, p. 74.

51 Galen, *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*, vii. 7; Galen, *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*, ed. by De Lacy, ii, 473.

52 Aristotle, *De Anima*, ii. 6–7, 418a–419a. Aristotle, *De Sensu*, ii. 437a 19–438b 16; cf. iv. 442a 33–442b 10.

with the exception of a few of his pupils, throughout antiquity and during the early Middle Ages.

However, Aristotle could also be correctly included among the representatives of the extramission theory of vision, since in other texts he clearly deviates from his own theory of vision and assumes extramission. He does so repeatedly in the *Meteorology*, for example when explaining the phenomenon of the rainbow. Here he clearly speaks of the reflection and refraction of the visual ray (ὄψις).[53] In *De insomniis*, finally, the gaze even becomes the bearer of physical substances when Aristotle states that when a menstruating woman gazes into a mirror, it leaves a spot of blood on it.[54] Apparently, Aristotle turns to the extramission theory of vision and its material visual ray when he is faced with phenomena that he is not able to explain using his own intromission theory.[55]

This theory of visual rays emanating from the eye that were equipped with sensitivity and reached out to objects and touched them there was the most influential theory of vision throughout antiquity. It formed the framework for notions of sight and of the process and different ways of seeing that all survived well beyond antiquity.

By 'different ways of seeing', I mean the wide range covered by what I would like to call the 'performative' gaze, the powerful and effective eyebeam or visual ray, which is ubiquitous in ancient, medieval, and early modern texts: the gaze of the gods, the gaze of love, the evil eye, the transmission of sickness through the eye, etc. For the gaze to be conceived of as performative, however, the general, basic model of a material visual ray needs to be extended using two possible explanations of its special modus operandi. The performing faculty of the eye can have a quantitative cause — that is, an excess of emotion, a surplus of pressure, so to speak. In certain situations, more or stronger rays

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53 Aristotle, *Meteorologia*, iii. 4. 373a 35–375b 15. A rainbow arises due to the reflection of our visual ray from droplets of moisture and towards the sun. As a result of this 'refraction', the visual ray is 'weakened'; the various colours correspond to the degree of weakening. Cf. i. 6. 343a 20; ii. 9. 370a 18–20; iii. 2. 372a 17–32; iii. 3. 372b 16–19; iii. 4. 373b 5–10; iii. 6. 377a 29–378a 12. Cf. also *De Caelo*, ii. 8. 290a 17–24, and *De generatione animalium*, v. 2. 780b 33–781a 13.

54 Aristotle, *De insomniis*, 459b 24–460a 32 (459b 28–460a 18). On the vast later tradition of this motif from the twelfth century onwards, see Hub, 'Aristotle's "Bloody Mirror" and Natural Science'.

55 Many authors followed the passages in which Aristotle assumes the existence of a visual ray. This was already the case in his disciple Theophrastus, *De sensu et sensibilibus*, 18, in Stratton, *Theophrastus and the Greek Physiological Psychology before Aristotle*, pp. 65–151, pp. 80–83; and *De vertigo*, 7–9: Theophrastus of Eresus, *On Sweat, On Dizziness and On Fatigue*, ed. by Fortenbaugh, Sharples, and Sollenberger, pp. 190–93. The Pseudo-Aristotelian *Problemata* also assumed the existence of visual rays (see in particular iii. 10, xi. 58, xv. 6, xv. 7, xvi. 13, xxv. 9, xxxi. 7, 8, 15–16, 19–21, and 25). Cf. Jones, 'Peripatetic and Euclidean Theories of Visual Ray'. It was not least due to this ambivalence in Aristotle himself and his followers that later authors, who preferred a combination of extramission and intromission or pure extramission, were able to appeal to Aristotle with a clear conscience.

are emitted. More, for example, when we raise the eyebrows in admiration and praise, or when we glare with anger. Stronger, for example, when the soul is excited. This intensifies a person's eyebeam, which may damage or dry up the 'vital spirit' of the person touched by the visual rays. Secondly, the performing faculty of the eye can have a qualitative cause — that is, a *dyscrasia*, an imbalance of elements and humours in the human body, which may contain either too much or too little of a particular substance and may therefore transmit its own 'corruption' or 'putrefaction' to the person seen, 'infecting' him or her. This disturbance of the humoral balance may be caused physiologically (e.g. by fever, plague, etc., as well as simply through ageing or during menstruation for a woman) or psychophysiologically (e.g. by hatred, envy, love, etc.). Ultimately, this extremely influential idea in Hippocratic and Galenic humoral pathology (consistent with the Aristotelian theory of matter) is also a quantitative argument, since the disturbed humoral balance is a matter of a quantitative imbalance among the elements and properties.

It is not possible here to pursue these connections between visual theory and humoral pathology any further.[56] The 'performative' gaze can in any case not be dismissed as a superstition of the 'people' or as a mere poetic metaphor; instead, it had a 'natural-science' explanation based on the extramission theory of vision (together with the humoral pathology of the body). In the present context, what is important to note is that the legacy of antiquity included the idea of an active, material visual ray, the idea that the ray's quantity and quality were able to change and intensify, and the idea that it was possible to touch with the gaze an object that was seen and thereby to share in its properties.

Medieval Extramission

Christianity by no means put an end to these ancient concepts by dismissing them as 'pagan superstitions'. Although the extramission theory of vision is not discussed in theoretical detail anywhere during the early centuries of the Christian era, it is presupposed as self-evident in countless passages mentioning 'the light of the eye' or the 'ray' of light, sight, or the eye, and in passages discussing the 'performative' gaze and the evil eye in particular. These are both taken for granted, not least in numerous passages in the Bible, in the Old Testament (and in Jewish authors) as well as in the New Testament,[57] and also by many of the Fathers of the Church.[58]

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56 For further references, see in particular Rakoszy, *Böser Blick, Macht des Auges und Neid der Götter*; and Hub, 'Aristotle's "Bloody Mirror" and Natural Science'.

57 Cf. in particular Allison, 'The Eye as a Lamp'; also Betz, 'Matthew vi.22f and Ancient Greek Theories of Vision'; and Marcus, 'A Note on Markan Optics'. For the evil eye, see the numerous articles by John H. Elliott — most recently 'Envy and the Evil Eye'.

58 See e.g. Lactantius, *De opificio Dei*, trans. by Knappitsch, pp. 219–87, esp. 248–55; Basil of Caesarea, *Homiliae in Hexaemeron*, 2.7 and 6.9: Basil of Caesarea, *Homélies sur l'Hexaéméron*,

More detailed presentations of the extramission theory of vision are given by Nemesius, the Greek philosopher and Bishop of Emesa (in Syria), by the Roman Neoplatonist Macrobius, and by Chalcidius in his commentary on Plato's *Timaeus*.[59] In his treatise *De natura hominis*, Nemesius draws on the *Placita philosophorum* by the Greek doxographer Aetios, and directly on Galen's *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*.[60] He first cites Hipparchus's comparison of the visual ray with the hand and then briefly mentions the views of the 'geometricians', the Epicureans, and Aristotle, with whom he then compares the Platonic theory, followed by a detailed presentation of Galen's visual theory that quotes from *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*. Although he does not explicitly decide in favour of one theory or the other, their sequence in the discussion and the fact that he only gives detailed presentation to the Galenian (and Platonic) theory suggest the conclusion that he can be counted among the representatives of the latter. Nemesius evidently regarded the Galenian (and Platonic) theory as being a valid synthesis of the previous theories. In a discussion of the ancient theories of vision in the seventh book of his *Saturnalia*, written at around the same time, Macrobius also draws on Galen's *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*, but — explicitly opting for the extramission theory — following Plato, he substitutes Galen's pneuma with a light-resembling ray that flows out of the eye and, if the air is illuminated by an external light, continues until it meets an object.[61]

The main source for the later spread of the extramission theory of vision, however, was the partial translation and commentary on Plato's dialogue

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ed. and trans. by Giet, pp. 170–73 and 372–77; Gregory of Nyssa, *De Infantibus Praemature Abreptis*, ed. by Schaff and Wace, pp. 375–76, cf. p. 372; Gregory of Nyssa, *Oratio Catechetica Magna*, Cap. V – *The Great Catechism*, ed. by Schaff and Wace, p. 478; Ambrosius, *Exameron*, vi. 9. 55, ed. by Schenkl, p. 247; Johannes Chrysostomos, *Homiliae XXI de Statuis ad Populum Antiochenum*, ed. by Migne, cols 122–24, 'Dei sapientia in oculorum constitutione'; Paulinus Nolanus, *Carmina*, 23: Surmann, *Licht-Blick*, esp. pp. 69–77 and 356–66. For the evil eye, see e.g. Tertullian, *De Virginibus Velandis*, Cap. XV, in Stücklin, *Tertullian, De virginibus velandis*, pp. 64–65; Basil of Caesarea, *Homilia XI de Invidia*, 4: Basil of Caesarea, 'Homily 11: Concerning Envy', trans. by Wagner, pp. 463–74. Cf. also Philo of Alexandria, *De Abrahamo*, xxix–xxx, 150–58: Philo of Alexandria, *On Abraham*, trans. by Colson, pp. 76–81; *De Cherubim*, xxviii, 96–97: Philo of Alexandria, *On the Cherubim, and the Flaming Sword, and Cain the First Man Created out of Man*, trans. by Colson and Whitaker, p. 67. See Schleusener-Eichholz, *Das Auge im Mittelalter*, i, 263–66; Limberis, 'The Eye Infected by Evil'; Leyerle, 'John Chrysostom on the Gaze'; Dickie, 'The Fathers of the Church and the Evil Eye'; and Rakoszy, *Böser Blick, Macht des Auges und Neid der Götter*, pp. 216–26.

59 On what follows here, cf. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision*, pp. 87–103; Schleusener-Eichholz, *Das Auge im Mittelalter*, i, 23–128, esp. pp. 51–79; Akbari, *Seeing through the Veil*, pp. 21–44; also Frank, *The Memory of the Eyes*, esp. pp. 114–33; and Frank, 'The Pilgrim's Gaze in the Age before Icons'.

60 Nemesius, *Premnon Physicon – De Natura Hominis*, Cap. VII: 'De visu'; Nemesius Emesenus, *De Natura Hominis Graece et Latine*, pp. 178–89 and 49–53; Nemesius Emesenus, *On the Nature of Man*, trans. and ed. by Sharples and van der Eijk, pp. 104–09. Cf. Domanski, *Die Psychologie des Nemesius*, pp. 99–107.

61 Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, vii. 14, trans. by Kastner, pp. 465–69.

Timaeus by Chalcidius, probably written by a Christian author in northern Italy around *ad* 400.[62] However, in commenting on the *Timaeus*, Chalcidius merged Plato's theory with the Stoics' and Galen's visual pneuma, by replacing Plato's light-resembling ray with Galen's pneuma — the inverse of Macrobius's position. The widespread distribution of Chalcidius's Platonic-Galenic theory of vision is attested to by an unusually large number of manuscripts.[63] However, the earliest copies only date from the ninth century, while their numbers increase by leaps and bounds during the twelfth century and the translation and commentary by Chalcidius are then also explicitly cited — a point to which we shall return.

Initially, however, it was the reception of Plato's theory of vision by Augustine that had the greatest influence. Although the philosopher, who had converted from Platonism to Christianity, does not develop any detailed theoretical presentation of the visual process, he presupposes in numerous passages the existence of the extramission theory's material visual ray. It is precisely the matter-of-course way in which he does this that provides significant evidence for the prevalence of the extramission theory in his time. His most detailed accounts of vision are in *De genesi ad litteram* and *De Trinitate*. In his commentary on Genesis, he relates how the eyes emit rays of light that can be 'pulled in' to examine objects nearby or 'sent forth' to view objects further away.[64] And in both *De genesi ad litteram* and *De Trinitate*, Augustine insists that these visual rays emitted from the eyes are of a material nature and are equipped with sensitivity.[65] To quote from one of his sermons aimed more at the general public, that is, ordinary believers: 'In this very body which we carry around with us, I can find something whose inexpressible swiftness astonishes me; the ray from the eye, with which we touch whatever we behold. What you see, after all, is what you touch with the ray from your eye'.[66]

62 Chalcidius, ccxxxvi–ccxliii: 'De visu'; *Timaeus a Calcidio translatus commentarioque instructus*, ed. by Waszink, pp. 41–42 (Plato) and 248–59 (commentary); cf. Chalcidius, *Commentaire au Timée de Platon*, ed. and trans. by Bakhouche, i, 185–86 and 373–81.

63 See *Timaeus a Calcidio translatus commentarioque instructus*, ed. by Waszink, pp. cvii–cxxviii; Mensching, 'Zur Calcidius-Überlieferung'; Ricklin, 'Calcidius bei Bernhard von Chartres und Wilhelm von Conches'. Cf. also Hankins, 'The Study of the Timaeus in Early Renaissance Italy'.

64 Augustine, *De genesi ad litteram libri duodecim*, i. 16. § 31, ed. by Migne, col. 258; Augustine, *On Genesis*, trans. by Hill, ed. by Rotelle, p. 182.

65 Augustine, *De genesi ad litteram libri duodecim*, iv. 34. § 54; cf. also vii. 13–14. 20 and xii. 16. 32. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, ix. 3. 3, ed. by Mountain, p. 296; ed. by Schaff, p. 127. Cf. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, xi. 2. 2 and 4, ed. by Mountain, pp. 334–38; ed. by Schaff, pp. 145–46. Cf. Augustine, *De Quantitate Animae*, Cap. 23. § 43–44: Augustine, *The Greatness of the Soul*, trans. by Colleran, pp. 65–67; Augustine, *De musica*, vi. 5. 10, ed. and trans. by Jacobsson, pp. 28–31; Augustine, *Confessiones*, x. 6. § 9, ed. by Verheijen, p. 159; Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. by Chadwick, p. 184. Also *Epistula*, 211; Augustine, *Letters*, trans. by Parsons, v, 38–51. Cf. Thonnard, 'La Notion de lumière en philosophie augustinienne', esp. pp. 139–48; O'Daly, *Augustine's Philosophy of Mind*, pp. 80–105; Miles, 'Vision'.

66 Augustine, Sermo 277, Cap. 10–12 (Cap. 10: 'Radius oculi nostri, quo tangimus quidquid

Thanks to Augustine's status as an authority, his writings had an immense influence on subsequent conceptions and discussions of the visual process. His (and Macrobius's) Platonic extramission theory of sight is accepted and repeated, for example, in Boethius (early sixth century),[67] Cassiodorus (sixth century),[68] Alcuin of York (eighth century),[69] Johannes Scotus Eriugena (ninth century),[70] and Anselm of Canterbury (eleventh century).[71]

The (Platonic) extramission theory of vision also appears to have predominated in Byzantium. It is found, for example, in Meletios's *De Natura Hominis* (ninth century?)[72] and Theophilos's *De Corporis Humani Fabrica* ('The Structure of the Human Body', *c.* 900),[73] both of whom draw on Nemesius and also directly on Galen's *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*; in Symeon Seth's *Conspectus rerum naturalium* ('On the Things of Nature', eleventh century), which refers to Ptolemy's *Optics*,[74] and also in Michael Psellos's *De Omnifaria Doctrina* ('On the Manifold Doctrine', eleventh century), who borrows from Aetios's *Placita philosophorum* and also

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cernimus. Quod enim vides, oculi tui radio contingis'), ed. by Migne, cols 1262–64 (col. 1262); Augustine, *Sermons*, trans. by Hill, ed. by Rotelle, viii, 38–40 (p. 38).

67 Boethius, *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, v. 4. 26; Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, ed. and trans. by Walsh, p. 106. Cf. i. 1. 1 and i. 1. 7, ed. by Walsh, pp. 3 and 4.

68 Cassiodorus, *De anima*, xi: 'De positione corporis', ed. by Halporn, pp. 556–60.

69 Alcuin of York, *Disputatio Puerorum per Interrogationes et Responsiones*, ed. by Migne, col. 1105.

70 Johannes Scotus Eriugena, *De Divisione Naturae*, iii. 36. 730C–731A and v. 10–11. 882B–883A; Johannes Scotus Eriugena, *Periphyseon – The Division of Nature*, trans. by Sheldon-Williams, p. 366. Cf. Schneider, *Die Erkenntnislehre des Johannes Eriugena im Rahmen ihrer metaphysischen und anthropologischen Voraussetzungen*, pp. 39–42.

71 Anselm of Canterbury, *De Libertate Arbitrii*, Cap. 7; Anselm von Canterbury, *Freiheitsschriften*, ed. and trans. by Verweyen, pp. 96–97. Cf. Anselm von Canterbury, *De Veritate*, Cap. VI, ed. by Schmitt, p. 184. The most widely distributed text in the Middle Ages, Isidore of Seville's encyclopaedia, written around 600, appears to include examples of the extramission theory of vision in two passages, but in each case then mentions the opposite view, without reaching a decision. See *Etymologiae*, xi. 20 and xi. 36; Isidore of Seville, *The Medical Writings*, ed. by Sharpe, pp. 39 and 40.

72 Meletios, *De Natura Hominis*, 2: 'De oculis', ed. by Migne, cols 1162–80. Cf. Lascaratos and Tsirou, 'Ophthalmological Ideas in the Byzantine Author Meletius'.

73 Theophilos, *De Corporis Humani Fabrica*, iv. 15–26, esp. Cap. 24: 'Quomodo fiat visio' ('How Vision Occurs'), ed. by Greenhill, pp. 152–75, 167–71; Grimm-Stadelmann, 'Theophilos, *Der Aufbau des Menschen*', pp. 324–30, esp. pp. 329–30. I am grateful to Isabel Grimm-Stadelmann for this information.

74 Symeon Seth, *Conspectus rerum naturalium*, iv. 71–74, ed. by Delatte, pp. 71–73. Cf. Betancourt, 'Why Sight Is Not Touch', pp. 6–10. According to Betancourt, in this passage, the Byzantine author was only 'interested in the mathematical concern of optics' and the 'geometrical properties of optical rays' (p. 8). The text is in no sense a mathematical work, but rather a work on natural philosophy written by a physician. In the chapter on sensory perception, Symeon discusses the question of how vision occurs. He initially compares the intromission and extramission theories with one another and then sets out the latter in detail, concluding by explicitly taking its side: 'Hence, it is evident that the belief advocating that the emission of rays is the source of sight is more sound.' (p. 8).

directly from Plato's *Timaeus* and goes beyond them by explicitly drawing the conclusion of the existence of the evil eye and the gaze of love from the extramission theory of vision.[75]

The extramission theory of vision crops up occasionally in the context of art history. In the eighth and ninth centuries, for example, it was used in the iconoclastic dispute by the defenders of images who wanted to prove that vision was superior to hearing.[76] For example, Photios, Patriarch of Constantinople — in a sermon given in 867 in Hagia Sophia on the occasion of the solemn consecration of the first large mosaic after more than a century of disputes over the legitimacy of images — stated that visual rays are emitted by the eye, extend as far as the object viewed, touch it, and return with the information they have obtained to the eye again, which they penetrate, passing to the brain, where the information is visualized in order finally to be passed on to memory. The latter stages of the process are the same as with hearing, but the information communicated by vision is much greater, as the visual rays *touch* the object.[77]

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75 Psellos, *De Omnifaria Doctrina*, ed. by Westerink, p. 60, § 108 (visual process), p. 52, § 89 (colours), p. 60, § 109 (evil eye and gaze of love); cf. the German translation in Volk, *Der medizinische Inhalt der Schriften des Michael Psellos*, pp. 183–84 (§ 130 of the first recension: visual process), p. 184 (§ 14 of the first recension: colours), pp. 184–85 (§ 131 of the first recension: evil eye and gaze of love). Cf. ibid., pp. 168–75, on the text in general. In the section on colours, Psellos follows *Timaeus*, 67c–69d — a passage that was not available in the Latin West in the partial translation by Chalcidius. Elsewhere, using excerpts from Alexander of Aphrodisias's commentary on Aristotle's *On Sense and Sensible Objects*, Psellos presents the Aristotelian theory of vision. See Psellos, *Philosophica Minora*, pp. 16–17. Cf. Barber, *Contesting the Logic of Painting*, p. 94; and Betancourt, 'Why Sight Is Not Touch', p. 2.

76 See Nelson, 'To Say and to See', esp. pp. 150–55. Cf. by contrast, the important essay by Betancourt, 'Why Sight Is Not Touch'. Betancourt is of course right that 'extramission […] was never understood to be a by-product or species of touch'. But was it for that reason also 'never haptic' (p. 1)? 'Sight was never a vehicle for unmediated, haptic contact with an image' (p. 4). But are 'mediated' and 'haptic' mutually exclusive? As we have tried to show, the visual ray (whether in pure extramission or in the Platonic *synaugeia*) represents a material ray that creates a material connection between that which sees and that which is seen, even though this connection cannot be equated with a touch by the hand. In any case, the terminology of extramission can in my view not always be explained solely with its greater practicability for solving geometrical or mathematical questions (cf. note 74 above), and the mention of touch cannot be dismissed as a 'misleading language of analogy' (pp. 6 and 10) that was not intended to refer to the sensory processes of visual sensation, but rather to the cognitive processes of perception (p. 21). Cf. Betancourt, 'Tempted to Touch'.

77 Photios, *The Homilies*, ed. by Mango, p. 294. Cf. the critical discussion and correction of Mango's translation by Betancourt, 'Why Sight Is Not Touch', pp. 12–21. However, I cannot agree with the interpretation that the phrase 'the outpouring (προχύσει) and effluence (ἀπορροῇ) of the optical rays' reflects the Platonic *synaugeia* of visual ray and object ray, since (1) the two terms cannot be clearly divided across the two types of ray and are both found with reference to the visual ray, as Betancourt himself also has to admit, and (2) the terminological pairing 'optical rays' (τῶν ὀπτικῶν ἀκτίνων) that is also decisive for

Similarly, in the first half of the twelfth century, Abbot Suger of Saint-Denis used the visual-ray theory to explain the shining mosaics in the old church of Saint-Denis, or rather to justify why he had not had mosaics installed in the big new church. The eye, he reasoned, sends out rays that meet the objects, return from there to the eyes, and are borne into the soul by the visual ray. If the old church had been larger, the mosaics would therefore have lost their effect, as the visual ray, thought of as corporeal, was thought to lose strength with increasing length — doubly lengthened by its return to the beholder.[78]

Suger of Saint-Denis has long been associated with what some historians call the 'twelfth-century Renaissance'. During this time when ancient, pre-Christian writings were taken up with new interest, people gained an array of new sources for understanding the visual process. The Platonic extramission theory, for example, was given a mathematical and geometric basis, or more precise articulation, by Latin translations from the mathematical and geometric tradition of antiquity. Euclid's *Optica* was translated from the Greek by an anonymous translator as *Liber de Visu* in the early twelfth century.[79] Two translations from the Arabic followed in the second half of the twelfth century — one known as *De Radiis Visualibus* or *Liber de Fallacia Visus*, by an unknown translator, and another as *De Aspectibus*, by Gerard of Cremona (d. 1187), who also translated Tideus's *De Speculis*. Ptolemy's *Optica* was translated from Arabic into Latin by Eugene of Sicily *c.* 1160. In the thirteenth century, Heron of Alexandria's *Catoptrica* was also translated from the Greek by William of Moerbeke as *De Speculis* in 1269 (and attributed to Ptolemy). However, these translations did not initially lead to the development of an independent tradition in optics.

With the twelfth century's increased interest in Plato and the Neoplatonists, there was instead a growth of interest in the commentary on the *Timaeus* by Chalcidius, so that the Galenic variant of the Platonic extramission theory returned to the foreground again, further strengthened by the first translations of Galenic and Hippocratic writings by the Salerno school, and by Constantinus Africanus in particular. The influence of Chalcidius (and of Constantinus Africanus) in the twelfth century is found, for example, in Bernard of Chartres,[80] Hugh of St Victor,[81] Guillaume de Saint-Thierry,[82]

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interpreting the passage is, as far as I am aware, used exclusively for the rays that are emitted from the eye.

78 Suger of Saint-Denis, *De consecratione*, 9, ed. by Binding and Speer, p. 171 and n. 7.

79 Thiesen, 'Liber de Visu'. On this and what follows, cf. Lindberg, *A Catalogue of Medieval and Renaissance Optical Manuscripts* and Lindberg, *Theories of Vision*, pp. 209–11.

80 Bernard of Chartres, *Glosae super Platonem*, vii ('Tractatus de humano corpore'), ed. by Dutton, pp. 207–09 (commenting on *Timaeus* 45b–d).

81 Hugh of St Victor, *De Unione Corporis et Spiritus*, ed. by Migne, col. 287.

82 Guillaume de Saint-Thierry, *De Natura Corporis et Animae*, i. § 35–41, ed. by Verdeyen, pp. 115–17; ed. and trans. by Lemoine, pp. 106–15.

Honoris of Autun,[83] and Alan of Lille,[84] and in the greatest detail by Adelard of Bath[85] and William of Conches, who describes the visual process as follows:

> In the brain there is a certain airy and subtle substance: nothing corporeal can be more subtle than this substance. Thus, on account of its extreme subtlety and brilliance, it is termed fire by Plato […] (it) reaches the eye through this nerve; it then leaves through the center point of each eye, called the pupil, and if it finds brightness in the outside air it joins itself to that brightness and, together with it, reaches all the way to the obstacle, in the shape of a cone. When it touches this obstacle, it diffuses itself by natural fluidity through the whole surface of it, taking upon itself the shape and color of that object […]. It then returns, with the shape and color of the object, through the eyes to the cell of imagination, from there it passes to the cell of reason, and there it represents to the soul the shape and color of the object: so sight is effected.[86]

William describes this theory as 'the Platonic theory of sight, which is the only true one'.[87] He considers that its correctness is confirmed by two empirical phenomena: the transmission of eye diseases and the effect of the evil eye:

> If we look at anyone blear-eyed, we contract the same illness by (merely) looking at that person's eyes. For the substance mentioned permeates by diffusion the eyes (of the blear-eyed) and loaded with their rust (*rubigo*) returns to the eyes of the observer. But while further penetrating to the soul, it deposits that rust in the eyes; these, if predisposed to such a disease, are immediately corrupted. But if nothing were transferred from ourselves to them, how could this illness be contracted from sight?

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83 Honorius Augustodunensis, *De Philosophia Mundi Libri Quatuor*, iv. XXV ('De oculis') and XXVI ('Qualiter visus fiat'), ed. by Migne, cols 95–96.

84 Cf. Baumgartner, *Die Philosophie des Alanus de Insulis*, pp. 18–20. Cf. also Alexander Neckam (1157–1217), *De Naturis Rerum* (1190), cliii: 'De visu', ed. by Wright, pp. 234–38 (cf. clvi, ed. by Wright, pp. 251–52). Cf. *De Laudibus Divinae Sapientiae*, Distinctio IX, vv. 377–99, ed. by Wright, p. 495.

85 Adelard of Bath, *Quaestiones Naturales*, xxiii–xxx, esp. xxiii–xxv; Adelard of Bath, *Die Quaestiones Naturales*, ed. by Müller, pp. 26–36, esp. pp. 26–31; cf. ibid., pp. 83–84 (commentary by Müller); Adelard of Bath, *Conversations with his Nephew*, ed. and trans. by Burnett and Ronca, pp. 135–55, esp. pp. 135–47.

86 William of Conches, *Dragmaticon Philosophiae*, vi. II. 19 ('De oculis et visu'), § 3–5; William of Conches, *A Dialogue on Natural Philosophy*, trans. by Ronca and Curr, pp. 156–60, quoted § 4–5, pp. 157–58. Cf. Cap. 20; ibid., pp. 160–62. Very similar in William of Conches, *Philosophia*, iv. XXII. § 39 ('De oculo') and iv. XXIII. § 40–43 ('Qualiter fiat visus'), ed. and trans. by Maurach, pp. 107 and 195–96, also pp. 108–09 and 196–97. See also William of Conches, *Glosae super Platonem*, cxxxvii–cxlii, ed. by Jeauneau, pp. 246–59. Cf. Ricklin, 'Calcidius bei Bernhard von Chartres und Wilhelm von Conches'. Cf. Gregory, *Anima Mundi*, pp. 172–74; and Ricklin, 'Vue et vision chez Guillaume de Conches et Guillaume de Saint-Thierry', esp. pp. 34–40.

87 William of Conches, *Dragmaticon Philosophiae*, vi. II. 19. § 3; William of Conches, *A Dialogue on Natural Philosophy*, trans. by Ronca and Curr, p. 157.

Another proof of the same fact is the evil eye (*fascinum*), which comes about as follows […]. If someone of a distempered complexion sends forth his visual beam into the tender face of a little child, that distempered beam, coming as it does from a distempered person, by touching the face infects and corrupts it. For this reason old women cure this infirmity by licking the face of the child and spitting out: for they spit out whatever is harmful there.[88]

Arabic Optics: Aristotelian Intromission

The extramission theory of vision thus remained unchallenged for the first millennium of the Christian era, until the twelfth century. In the meantime, however — around the year 1000 — serious competition for the theory had arisen among the Arabic Aristotelians. Although al-Kindi and al-Farabi continued to defend the visual-ray theory, Alhazen, Avicenna, and others for the first time started to work on the assumption that light rays are received by the visual spirit or pneuma within the eye. They combined the Aristotelian theory of reception with Galen's visual pneuma and with Euclid's and Ptolemy's optical and geometric concepts, thus retaining the notion of the visual spirit and the notion of the visual pyramid, but reversing the direction of the rays.[89]

Beginning in the twelfth century, translations of Arabic treatises on optics began to appear in the West. Among the earliest examples of the reception of Arabic science was Dominicus Gundissalinus, whose catalogue of the sciences, *De Divisione Philosophiae*, written in Toledo around 1140, included a chapter on optics (*De Aspectibus*) that is a more or less literal translation of the corresponding chapter in al-Farabi's 'Book on the Division of the Sciences', which Gundissalinus had himself previously translated into Latin under the title *De Scientiis*. Despite the new information from the Aristotelian writings, it still subscribes to the (Platonic) extramission theory.[90] Elsewhere in his text, Gundissalinus also reverts to Avicenna and al-Ghazali, but he does not appear to have known of Alhazen's *Optics*, as

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88 William of Conches, *Dragmaticon Philosophiae*, vi. II. 19. § 14–15; William of Conches, *A Dialogue on Natural Philosophy*, trans. by Ronca and Curr, p. 160. Very similarly in William of Conches, *Philosophia*, iv. XXIII: 'Qualiter fiat visus' (§ 41: transmission of disease and evil eye), ed. and trans. by Maurach, pp. 108–09 and 196–97.

89 Lindberg, *Theories of Vision*, pp. 18–86. It was this geometrical equivalence that allowed many theorists of optics after Alhazen to retain the extramission theory, or a mixture of the two.

90 Dominicus Gundissalinus, *De Divisione Philosophiae*, chapter 'De aspectibus', ed. and trans. by Fidora, pp. 216–21. Al-Farabi, *De Scientiis Secundum Versionem Dominici Gundisalvi*, ed. and trans. by Schneider, pp. 148–53. The text was translated again under the same title by Gerhard of Cremona. See Salman, 'The Mediaeval Latin Translations of Alfarabi's Works', esp. pp. 245–46. The translation by Gundissalinus was printed in Paris as late as 1638 as part of al-Farabi's *Opera Omnia*. On al-Farabi himself: Eastwood, 'Al-Farabi on Extramission, Intromission, and the Use of Platonic Visual Theory'.

he would otherwise not have been satisfied with simply copying the brief details given by al-Farabi.

The first writer to use Alhazen's *Optics* (*De Aspectibus*) in the thirteenth century was Bartholomaeus Anglicus, the compiler of one of the best-known medieval encyclopaedias. In his *De proprietatibus rerum* (completed around 1240), the Franciscan devotes an entire chapter to the sense of vision, including a detailed account of the mechanism of vision. Referring to Alhazen, Aristotle, Augustine, and Constantinus Africanus, he represents (at a period contemporary with Grosseteste, but still before Bacon and Pecham) a combination or synthesis of extramission and intromission: 'Not only does the *species* of the object come to the eye along the visual pyramid, but also the *species* of the eye travels to the object via the same pyramid, which extends as far as that place'.[91]

By contrast, the second large encyclopaedia dating from the thirteenth century, Thomas of Cantimpré's *De Natura Rerum*, written between 1230 and 1243, represents a pure extramission theory.[92] It was this encyclopaedia by Thomas that became most widespread in the German-speaking region through Conrad of Megenberg's *Buch der Natur* of *c.* 1350, which represents a German version of Thomas of Cantimpré's Latin text. The book was the first natural history written in German and met with overwhelming success that continued for nearly two hundred years.[93] The third great thirteenth-century encyclopaedia, Vincent of Beauvais's *Speculum Naturale*, probably published around 1260, the first part of his vast *Speculum Maius*, offers a detailed discussion of the various theories of vision extending over numerous chapters, and he takes more authors into account than any writer before him. Mention is made of Plato, Aristotle, Euclid, Aulus Gellius, Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine, Chalcidius, Albertus Magnus, and William of Conches, as well as al-Farabi and Avicenna. He initially appears to favour the Platonic theory of vision, which he even describes as the 'only true one', but he then endorses Aristotle's view, so that he can be regarded as representing the Arabic-Aristotelian intromission theory.[94]

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91 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum*, iii. 17 ('De virtute visibilis'); ed. by R. James Long, in Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum*, ed. by Van den Abeele and others, pp. 167–72, 169–70. Cf. the fourteenth-century Middle English translation in Trevisa, *On the Properties of Things*, ed. by Seymour, i, 108–13 (p. 110). Cf. v. 5; Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum*, ed. by Van den Abeele and others, pp. 178–81.

92 Thomas of Cantimpré, *Liber de Natura Rerum*, i. 6: 'De oculis', ed. by Boese, pp. 18–21. Cf. viii. 4: 'De basilisco', pp. 178–79.

93 Conrad von Megenberg, *Buch der Natur*, i. 5: 'Von den Augen'; cf. ii. 30 (rainbow) and iii. E. 3 (basilisk): Konrad von Megenberg, *Das 'Buch der Natur'*, ed. by Luff and Steer, pp. 33, 123–25, 222–23. Cf. Gottschall, *Konrad von Megenbergs Buch von den natürlichen Dingen*, pp. 273–79 and 321–39 (esp. pp. 333–34). Incidentally, the extramission theory of vision is also assumed in Sacrobosco's *Sphaera*, the most frequently used textbook of astronomy and cosmography right up to the fifteenth century; *The Sphere of Sacrobosco and its Commentators*, ed. and trans. by Thorndike, p. 81.

94 Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum Naturale*, xxv. 28–49, in Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum Quadruplex sive Speculum Maius*, cols 1793–807.

The Arabic science of optics only achieved a breakthrough, however, with the writers known as the perspectivists — Robert Grosseteste, Roger Bacon, John Pecham, Witelo, and Theodoric (Dietrich) of Freiberg, who founded an independent optical tradition based on Alhazen's *Optics* in particular. Many have seen a close connection between this 'scientia perspectiva' and the production and reception of art and consider that initial efforts to draw from nature, which ultimately led to linear perspective in art, were based on it. We may quote Klaus Bergdolt's position as an example here. He first states that the perspectivist theory and teachings reached their culmination in the Viterbo Curia and that the new paradigm spread from there to Giotto and his circle and disciples, giving rise to their effort to paint from nature or at least helping them on the path towards it. Following a mysterious return to a period of medieval darkness during the second half of the fourteenth century, the theory of intromission à la Roger Bacon, according to Bergdolt, finally led to the development of linear perspective in fifteenth-century Florence. 'The proponents of the costruzione legittima à la Brunelleschi', Bergdolt writes, 'derided the Platonic thesis of light emanating from the eye'.[95]

I would like to draw attention here to three facts: firstly, that the optical theory propounded by the perspectivists did not really dismiss 'medieval' extramission. Instead, they represented a combination of intromission and extramission. Secondly, in addition to this mixed model among the so-called perspectivists, the pure extramission theory continued to be defended. This affects in particular the area of the 'performative' gaze in all its variants, as well as the continuance of the Galenic extramission theory of vision among physicians, and among oculists in particular. Thirdly, the inventors of linear perspective in the fifteenth century show no evidence whatsoever that the perspectivists and their new intromissive paradigm were a prerequisite for their invention.

The Perspectivists' Compromise Model between Intromission and Extramission

Unlike Alhazen, the so-called perspectivists did not dismiss the extramission theory of vision altogether. Their new paradigm of intromitted species did *not* lead to the disavowal of the extramission theory, and least of all to the abandonment of its implications. The perspectivists joined Alhazen in positing 'intromitted' species as being necessary for vision and its principal cause. Yet they were convinced that the visual sense is not only passive but also active, and this led in the case of Grosseteste, Bacon, and Pecham to a mixed model or compromise model between intromission and extramission.[96]

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95 Bergdolt, *Das Auge und die Theologie*, esp. pp. 38–48, 48. Cf. Bergdolt, 'Bacon und Giotto'. Cf. e.g. White, *The Birth and Rebirth of Pictorial Space*, pp. 126–30, and most recently Büttner, *Giotto und die Ursprünge der neuzeitlichen Bildauffassung*.

96 See in particular Lindberg, *Theories of Vision*, pp. 87–132; and Federici-Vescovini, *Studi*

The perspectivists' concessions to the visual ray theory were closely associated with their Neoplatonic metaphysics of light in general and to the doctrine of species in particular. The doctrine of the species, which had been developed by Robert Grosseteste from the Neoplatonic conception of emanation, maintained that every natural object propagates some power from itself to surrounding bodies.[97] Such powers — 'corporeal' entities known as 'species' — are responsible for all effective causality in the universe.[98] Grosseteste's view was unreservedly adopted by Roger Bacon and John Pecham and applied to Alhazen's optics, since rays of light received by the eye were only a special case of species — that is, *visible* species. However, if *every* natural body emits *corporeal* species, then the same must also apply to the eye itself: the eye also propagates some power from itself to surrounding bodies — that is, *visual* species. Thus, a special power in relation to the objects or persons being viewed could be attributed to these material species emanating from the eye — and this was precisely the step taken by most of the perspectivists, although with different degrees of emphasis.

According to Grosseteste (*c.* 1240), the prerequisite for sight is that the radiation from the visible object should be united with the rays of visual species emanating from the eye:

> Nor is it to be thought that *the emission of visual rays* [from the eye] is only imagined and without reality, as those think who consider the part and not the whole. But it should be understood that the visual species [issuing from the eye] is a substance, shining and radiating like the sun, the radiation of which, when coupled with radiation from the exterior shining body, entirely completes vision.[99]

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sulla prospettiva medievale. Cf. also Tachau, 'Seeing as Action and Passion' and Tachau, '"Et maxime visus, cuius species venit ad stellas et ad quem species stellarum veniunt"'. Witelo and Dietrich of Freiberg no longer recognized any extramissive elements, but they were less widely known.

97 See for example Baur, *Die Philosophie des Robert Grosseteste, Bischofs von Lincoln*, pp. 76–109; Crombi, *Robert Grosseteste and the Origins of Experimental Science*, pp. 104–16 and 128–31. Cf. Lindberg's introduction in *Roger Bacon's Philosophy of Nature*, ed. by Lindberg, pp. xxxv–lxxv.

98 The corporeality of species is most explicitly stated in Roger Bacon's *Opus Maius*, v (Perspectiva). I. 6. 3–4: *Roger Bacon and the Origins of 'Perspectiva'*, ed. and trans. by Lindberg, pp. 194–205; and in his *De Multiplicatione Specierum*, iii. 2–3: *Roger Bacon's Philosophy of Nature*, ed. by Lindberg, pp. 190–205, p. 190: 'I therefore state unconditionally that the species of a corporeal thing is truly corporeal and that it has truly corporeal being' ('ideo absolute diffinio quod species rei corporalis est vere corporalis et habet esse vere corporale').

99 Robert Grosseteste, *De iride*, in Grosseteste, *Die philosophischen Werke*, ed. by Baur, pp. 72–73; cited after *A Source Book in Medieval Science*, ed. by Grant, p. 389. Cf. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision*, pp. 94–102, esp. pp. 94–95.

In John Pecham's *Perspectiva Communis* (*c.* 1277?), the most widely circulated medieval treatise on *perspectiva*, the task of the rays of visual species is to 'moderate' the rays emitted by objects if they are too strong:

> For as Aristotle [!] says, the eye not merely is the recipient of action but acts itself, just as shining bodies do. Therefore the eye must have a natural light to alter visible species and make them commensurate with the visual power, for the species are emitted by the light of the sun but moderated with respect to the eye by mixing with the natural light of the eyes […]. It is evident, therefore, that there is *some kind of emission of rays.*[100]

In his *Tractatus de Perspectiva* (*c.* 1270?), however, in a discussion of the question 'Is Sight by Emission or Intromission?', the solution he proposes is that visual species are necessary to 'excite' the species coming from the object and make them proportional to the visual power. And at the very end of this discussion, Pecham admits that cats can probably see by the power of their visual rays alone.[101]

According to Roger Bacon (*c.* 1260) the visual ray 'prepares' the air for the species emanating from the object and 'ennobles' the species coming from the visible object.[102] Surprisingly, to support his view 'that in the act of sight the species or power of the eye extends to the visible object', Bacon even refers to a series of representatives of a pure extramission theory (Aristotle [!], Ptolemy, Tideus, al-Kindi, Euclid, 'and all the rest', as well as Augustine), whose hypotheses he accepts as true.[103] Furthermore, he regards these as being strengthened by a series of empirical observations of phenomena which, according to him, can only be explained by assuming an extramission of visual rays. Finally, Bacon even defends the view that vision is sometimes possible even *only* using the rays emitted by the eyes. For example, the fact that we only see haze or fog from a greater distance, but not when we are directly inside it, is explained not by the fact that species are emitted by the haze, but rather by the fact that the species emanating from the eyes are weakened and ultimately stopped by the moist and dense air.[104] If the air in the immediate vicinity is condensed and the visual species are very weak (as is the case in very old people), then the latter can be reflected by the air, so that the person

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100 John Pecham, *Perspectiva communis*, Prop. I. 46: 'The natural light of the eye contributes to vision by its radiance'; *John Pecham and the Science of Optics – 'Perspectiva communis'*, ed. by Lindberg, pp. 128–31. Cf. ibid., Introduction, pp. 34–37.

101 Pecham, *Tractatus de Perspectiva*, ed. by Lindberg, pp. 36–42.

102 Roger Bacon, *Opus Maius*, v (Perspectiva). I. 7. 2–4 (4); *Roger Bacon and the Origins of 'Perspectiva'*, ed. and trans. by Lindberg, pp. 100–107 (p. 105); cf. Linberg's introduction, ibid., pp. lxxxiii–lxxxvi ('Extra- vs. Intromission'). Similarly, *De multiplicatione specierum*, I. 2; *Roger Bacon's Philosophy of Nature*, ed. by Lindberg, pp. 30–33.

103 Roger Bacon, *Opus Maius*, v (Perspectiva). I. 7. 2, title of chapter; *Roger Bacon and the Origins of 'Perspectiva'*, ed. and trans. by Lindberg, p. 101.

104 Roger Bacon, *Opus Maius*, v (Perspectiva). I. 9. 1 and II. 2. 1; cf. Pars I. 10. 2.

affected only sees himself, as in a mirror.[105] However, if the radiance from the eyes is very strong, as in the case of cats, then the visual species are able to penetrate even darkness and see objects without any visible species having to emanate from the latter.[106]

There were many reasons for this continued adherence to the existence of extramitted visual rays. The Neoplatonic basis has already been mentioned. The perspectivists were clearly making an effort to harmonize the newly available accounts by Alhazen, Avicenna, and Averroes with those of their own tradition of extramission theories. In addition, a need to preserve the subject as playing an active part in perception (voluntary and thus responsible before God) may also have played a role. Not least, however, a purely receptive eye would have implied abandoning a natural-science explanation of the performative gaze and thus of the performativity of the gaze itself. All of the authors mentioned were familiar with it and confirm it.[107]

The same also applies to the perspectivists' contemporaries Albertus Magnus and his pupil Thomas Aquinas. They both received the Aristotelian intromission theory in its Arabic form, but where it is a matter of upholding and explaining the phenomena of the performative gaze, the extramission theory was reintroduced, so that they also ultimately represent a mixed or combined model of intromission and extramission. A passage in Albertus's *Summa de Creaturis* that is of particular interest in the present context of image production and reception may be mentioned as an example here. In a discussion of the question of whether the sense organs are only passive in receiving the 'species' from the perceived object, or whether they are also active, he asserts that vision is indeed also an active process and that human beings can therefore exert an effect through their gaze on the object they are looking at; and he explains the fact that this is not always the case by introducing the interesting distinction that although the eye is *per se* passive in receiving reflected light rays, it can become active *per accidens*, namely in the case of a special disposition or indisposition of the body that leads to a transference of that disposition to other bodies through the gaze.[108]

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105 Roger Bacon, *Opus Maius*, v (Perspectiva). III. 1. 5. Aristotle, *Meteorologia*, iii. 4. 373b 5–10 (cf. note 53 above). For the later tradition of this motif, see Hub, 'Aristotle's "Bloody Mirror" and Natural Science', n. 7. Cf. also Roger Bacon, *Opus Maius*, v (Perspectiva). II. 1. 3 (double vision), II. 1. 1 (people with deep-set eyes see further than people with prominent eyes, which is confirmed by experiment: a man sitting at the bottom of a well can see the stars by day for his visual rays disperse less).

106 Roger Bacon, *Opus Maius*, v (Perspectiva). I. 5. 1.

107 Robert Grosseteste, *Expositio in Epistolam Sancti Pauli ad Galatas*, iii. 3, in Grosseteste, *Opera*, ed. by McEvoy and others, pp. 72–74. Roger Bacon, *Opus Majus*, iv, ed. by Bridges, i, 398–99; Bacon, *Opus Majus*, trans. by Burke, i, 413–14. Cf. *Epistola Fratris Rogerii Baconis de Secretis Operibus Artis et Naturae, et de Nullitate Magiae*, Cap. III, in Bacon, *Opera Quaedam Hactenus Inedita*, ed. by Brewer, pp. 528–32; cf. ibid., Cap. V, p. 535. Pecham, *Tractatus de Perspectiva*, ed. by Lindberg, pp. 36–42.

108 Albertus Magnus, *Summae de Creaturis*, II. 45. 4, ed. by Borgnet, pp. 417–18. On visual theory

In the misogynistic tradition derived from Albertus and above all from Thomas Aquinas — examples of which are the *De Secretum Mulierum* (*c*. 1300), spuriously attributed to Albertus, and the notorious *Malleus Malleficarum* by the Inquisitor Heinrich Kramer (1487) — a shifting of the combination model into a purely visual ray theory can be observed.[109] This change from the combination of intromission and extramission into pure extramission when phenomena associated with the performative gaze needed to be explained to a wider public is also seen in the widely published and highly influential anthology and preaching manual *De oculo morali* ('On the Moral Eye') by Peter of Limoges, written in Paris between 1275 and 1289 — although it is based not on Albertus or Thomas, but on the perspectivist tradition. A Franciscan scholar, Peter of Limoges had studied Ptolemy, Constantinus Africanus, Alhazen, and many other 'doctores speculativae' and 'auctores perspectivae', and had evidently read Roger Bacon and John Pecham in order to make the latest discoveries in natural science fruitful in an allegorical form for the moral instruction of the faithful. In a chapter headed 'That a woman's eyes are the darts of unchasteness by which many are wounded', Peter of Limoges warns his listeners and readers against women and their gaze in the following words:

> The basilisk kills birds flying past simply by looking at them; so, too, the appearance of a woman sometimes drags heavenly men down to the depths of lust and thus kills them spiritually. […] Although the basilisk is a short serpent, it kills many by its sight; thus, although something might seem to be moderate in appearance, nevertheless it wounds and kills many. Namely, it seems probable that when a woman looks at a man lustfully, the lustful vapor emanating from her heart rises to her eyes, infecting the woman's visual rays. Thus infected, the rays travel to the man's eyes (assuming that we see by extramission) and when they arrive at the man's eye and infect them, the infection passes to the man's heart, just as it proceeded from the

and the performative gaze in Albertus and Thomas, see Hub, 'Aristotle's "Bloody Mirror" and Natural Science', esp. pp. 42–46.

109   The visual ray theory is also used in several different witchcraft treatises, and even more so by the educational countermovement of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which attempted to exculpate the alleged witches through natural-science evidence that the evil eye was a quite natural physical phenomenon over which human beings had no power. Another group of topics in which the visual ray theory continues to appear is the engagement with the teachings of Avicenna and al-Ghazali on the capacity to move and alter a foreign body by the imaginative power of the soul alone. This engagement can already be encountered among the perspectivists, as well as in Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas, but it was considerably intensified by the condemnation of the teaching in 1277 by the Bishop of Paris, Stephen Tempier (article no. 112). It led not only various philosophers of the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but also numerous writers in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, to resort to the theory of a material visual ray (in accordance with the Aristotelian principle that causation is based on physical contact) in order to rescue the performativity of the gaze from doctrinal condemnation. For further details on these two points, see Hub, 'Aristotle's "Bloody Mirror" and Natural Science', esp. pp. 52–59.

woman's heart first. […] And according to Aristotle, when a menstruating woman looks in a mirror, she stains and infects it.[110]

I have deliberately chosen a quotation from a sermon here. Whatever the sophisticated perspectivist theories said about the sole or primary significance of intromission and whatever the perspectivists may have taught at the universities, what ordinary people actually learned about the eyesight was that they had a more or less corporeal eyebeam or visual ray that was able to transmit different qualities, both sickness and virtue.

The Persistence of the Extramission Theory: The Case of Ophthalmology

Regardless of the perspectivists, the pure extramission theory of vision thus continued to persist. It is unfortunately not possible here to discuss the rich tradition of the 'performative gaze', which would be completely inexplicable without the extramission theory. We have encountered an example of it in Peter of Limoges. Instead, I would like to draw the reader's attention here to ophthalmology as another subject area in which the worlds of science and popular experience came together, in which the visual ray was not only accepted as a fact but was also sometimes explained to ordinary people.

Arabic scholars had communicated not only their interpretation of the Aristotelian intromission theory of vision to the Latin West, but also the Galenic version of the extramission theory. The latter entered Europe from the Arabic world even before the Aristotelian theory, and among physicians and above all oculists it largely maintained its independence from the so-called perspectivists and other representatives of reception theories of vision or a combination theory of intromission and extramission.

The principal works by Galen in which he presents his theory of vision in detail, *De Usu Partium* and *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*, remained unknown in the Latin West until the early fourteenth century.[111] Despite this, physicians' conceptions of vision had already been following Galen's teachings since the twelfth century. They drew the ancient physician's theory of vision from Latin translations of his works devoted to the pathology of the human body, including the eye — namely *De Interioribus*, *De Morbo et Accidenti*, and Galen's commentary on the Hippocratic *Liber Prognosticorum*.[112]

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110 Peter of Limoges, *De oculo morali*, viii. 7; Peter of Limoges, *The Moral Treatise on the Eye*, ed. and trans. by Newhauser, pp. 99–100, with bibliography. Cf. Kessler and Newhauser, *Optics, Ethics, and Art in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*.

111 *De Usu Partium* was first translated into Latin by Nicolo da Reggio in 1317; see French, '*De Juvamentis Membrorum* and the Reception of Galenic Physiological Anatomy'. *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis* only became available for the first time in the Greek edition of 1525; see Nutton, '*De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis* in the Renaissance'.

112 In addition, there were dismissive presentations of the Galenic theory of vision in the Latin

The main sources responsible for the predominance of the Galenic theory of vision in Western medicine, however, were the numerous Latin translations of translations and writings by Arabic physicians.[113]

The most important translator of Galenic texts, who also wrote his own influential Galenic works, was Hunayn ibn Ishaq (808–73), whose *Book of the Ten Treatises of the Eye*, 'the earliest existing systematic text-book of ophthalmology', follows Galen's teachings in every respect and presents the visual process in detail based on *De Usu Partium* and *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*.[114] Almost all of the later Arabic and Persian physicians and oculists followed Hunayn's presentation — particularly the two most influential of the later textbooks of ophthalmology written around the year 1000, the *Select Book on Eye Diseases* by Ammar ben Ali al-Mausili and the *Memorandum Book for Oculists* by Ali ibn Isa,[115] which in turn served as a source for numerous later medical works.[116] Finally, *The Complete Book of the Medical Art* by Ali ibn al-Abbas al-Majusi, written *c.* 980, also includes a very similar chapter on the visual process.[117] All of the texts mentioned here, like the Arabic oculists in general, represent a

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translations of the writings of Avicenna (particularly *De Anima*) and Averroes (*De Sensu et Sensato* and *Colliget*). See Salmón, 'Sources for a Galenic Visual Theory'; and Salmón, 'The Many Galens of the Medieval Commentators on Vision'. Cf. also Durling, 'A Chronological Census of Renaissance Editions and Translations of Galen'; and Baader, 'Galen im mittelalterlichen Abendland'.

113 Lindberg, *Theories of Vision*, p. 34, stressed the dependence of medieval physicians on Latin translations of Arabic treatises. In the discussions that follow here below, I regard Lindberg's older position as being confirmed, even though Fernando Salmón (see preceding note) rightly drew attention to other sources and numerous divergences from the Galenic original among later authors.

114 Hunayn ibn Ishaq, *The Book of the Ten Treatises on the Eye*, ed. and trans. by Meyerhof, esp. pp. 20–39. Cf. Stansfield Eastwood, *The Elements of Vision*, esp. pp. 21–46; and also Hirschberg, 'Über das älteste arabische Lehrbuch der Augenheilkunde'; and Meyerhof and Prüfer, 'Die Lehre vom Sehen bei Hunain B. Ishaq'. Cf. also Lindberg, *Theories of Vision*, pp. 33–42.

115 Ammar ben Ali al-Mausili, *Das Buch der Auswahl von den Augenkrankheiten*, trans. by Hirschberg, Lippert, and Mittwoch, pp. 1–152, esp. p. 32 (Cap. 13). Ali ibn Isa, *Erinnerungsbuch für Augenärzte*, ed. and trans. by Hirschberg and Lippert, esp. pp. 24–29 (i. 19–20); cf. pp. 248–54 (iv. 4–8: visual disturbances caused by qualitative or quantitative injuries to the visual spirit). Wood's translation was unfortunately not available to me: Ali ibn Isa, *Memorandum Book of a Tenth-Century Oculist*, trans. by Wood.

116 The oculists who followed him either referred to Hunayn directly in their descriptions of the visual process or to the version passed down by Ali ibn Isa. As an example of the latter case, see the *Book of Sufficiency in Ophthalmology* by Halifa al-Halabi, written *c.* 1250; Halifa al-Halabi, *Buch vom Genügenden in der Augenheilkunde*, trans. by Hirschberg, Lippert, and Mittwoch, pp. 153–94. For an overview of the rich ophthalmological literature in Arabic, see Hirschberg, *Die arabischen Lehrbücher der Augenheilkunde* and Meyerhof's introduction to Hunayn ibn Ishaq, *The Book of the Ten Treatises on the Eye*, ed. and trans. by Meyerhof, pp. v–liii.

117 Ali ibn al-Abbas al-Majusi, *Die Augenheilkunde*, trans. by Gretschischeff, pp. 12–16.

purely Galenic conception of vision. Discoveries made in the new optics, and Alhazen in particular, as well as Avicenna, were not passed down.[118]

The same finding then also applies to the West, where all of the texts mentioned were already translated into Latin at an early stage and were widely distributed and printed several times around the year 1500. The main source responsible for this transfer of knowledge was the translation activity of Constantinus Africanus for the Schola Medica Salernitana, to provide materials for use in medical practice and the training of physicians. Constantinus Africanus, an Arab from Carthage who was taken prisoner and converted to Christianity (and died *c.* 1087 as a monk at Monte Cassino), simply edited many of his translations under his own name. He translated Hunayn ibn Ishaq's *Ten Treatises on the Eye* into Latin, and it was distributed and printed under the title *Liber de Oculis*, attributed to Constantinus himself, or less frequently to Galen.[119] The *Select Book on Eye Diseases* by Ammar ben Ali al-Mausili was translated into Latin as *De Oculis*, attributed to 'Canamusali de Baldach [Baghdad]', at an unknown date.[120] A partial translation of *The Complete Book of the Medical Art* by Ali ibn al-Abbas al-Majusi was adapted *c.* 1087 by Constantinus Africanus as *Liber Pantegni*, which became a founding text for the School of Salerno.[121] More complete and much better translations were produced by Johannes Afflatius under the title of *Liber Aureus*, and in 1127 by Stephen the Philosopher of Antioch as *Regalis Dispositio*, attributed to 'Haly Abbas'. The most important textbook of medieval medicine, the *Articella*, does not include any discussion of the visual process, but commentators occasionally supplemented the enumeration of the senses in Chapter 11 of

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118   Hirschberg, *Die arabischen Lehrbücher der Augenheilkunde*, pp. 115–17, and Schramm, 'Zur Entwicklung der physiologischen Optik in der arabischen Literatur', p. 298. The only exception is the *Book of the Light of the Eyes* by Salah ad-Din, written *c.* 1300, but as far as I am aware this was never translated into Latin. See Salah ad-Din, *Licht der Augen*, trans. by Hirschberg, Lippert, and Mittwoch, pp. 195–235, esp. 206–35 (Book ii). Incidentally, Avicenna, who otherwise represents a purely Aristotelian intromission theory, follows the Galenic extramission theory in the section on ophthalmology in his great *Canon* (translated into Latin in the second half of the twelfth century by Gerhard of Cremona as *Liber Canonis Medicinae* and printed several times around 1500), where eye disease is treated on the basis of quantitative or qualitative disturbances of the visual spirit. See Avicenna, *Die Augenheilkunde*, ed. and trans. by Hirschberg and Lippert, pp. 18–19 and 127–34.

119   *Constantini Africani Liber de Oculis*, fols 172–78; and *Galeni de Oculis Liber a Demetrio translatus*, in different complete Latin editions of Galen, notably the nine Venetian editions *apus Iuntas* from 1541 to 1625, and in other editions of Galen. A German translation of the *Liber de Oculis* is available in Haefeli-Till, *Der 'Liber de oculis' des Constantinus Africanus*, pp. 22–97, esp. pp. 32–44 (visual process), 53, 63 (visual disturbances due to quantitative or qualitative disturbances of the *spiritus visibilis*). For a list of manuscripts that contained the *De Oculis*, cf. Lindberg, *A Catalogue of Medieval and Renaissance Optical Manuscripts*, pp. 98–100. Cf. Salmón, 'Sources for a Galenic Visual Theory', pp. 168–69.

120   Lindberg, *A Catalogue of Medieval and Renaissance Optical Manuscripts*, pp. 100–101.

121   *Pentegni*, iii. 11 and 13, iv, 9–16, esp. Cap. 11. Cf. Constantinus Africanus, *Constantine the African and Ali ibn al-Abbas al-Magusi*, ed. by Burnett and Jacquart.

the first part of it, the 'Isagoge' by 'Johannitius' (Constantinus's translation of Hunayn's introduction to the *Ars Parva Galeni*), in a Galenic fashion.[122] Finally, we also encounter the Galenic extramission theory in the *Salernitan Questions*, a widely distributed didactic collection of questions and answers on anthropology and zoology.[123]

In the Latin West, the influence of Galenic visual theory led to a dual development. Although it came into conflict at the universities with the Aristotelian doctrine of vision from the late thirteenth century onwards — a conflict that was usually decided in favour of Aristotelian intromission[124] — practising oculists, who often had no university training but had been apprenticed with colleagues, continued to represent the Galenic theory of vision uninterrupted. This is the case, for example, with the *Practica Oculorum (De Probatissima Arte Oculorum)* by Benvenutus Grassus (Grapheus), probably written in the late thirteenth century for practising specialists and surviving in a large number of Latin and also vernacular manuscripts (in Italian, French, German, and English); it was also the first ophthalmology textbook to be printed, in 1474.[125] Although Benvenutus Grassus only mentions the mechanism of the visual process very briefly, and instead devotes the bulk of his treatise to a practical account of the various remedies to be applied to the eye in case of disease, he clearly follows Galen in relation to the visual process.[126]

As the case of Petrus Hispanus (the later Pope John XXI) shows, however, a fully Galenic visual theory was also taught even at the universities. His *Liber de Oculo*, written *c.* 1270 at the newly founded University of Siena, was the

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122 Jordan, 'The Construction of a Philosophical Medicine', pp. 50–51 (the so-called 'Digby Commentary'), 59 (Bartholomaeus of Salerno).

123 *The Prose Salernitan Questions*, ed. by Lawn, pp. 10 (B 16), 49–51 (B 105–08), 63 (B 129), 90–91 (B 172), 98 (B 179), 138 (B 291), 161 (Ba 9), 165 (Ba 20–21 and 23), 175 (Ba 50), etc. Cf. Lawn, *The Salernitan Questions*. Cf. also the *Problemata Varia Anatomica*, a collection of *Quaestiones* from the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century (known also by the first words of its incipit, 'Omnes homines'), which was widely circulated and continued to be printed until 1686. *Problemata Varia Anatomica*, ed. by Lind, p. 19 and p. 20. Lind describes the *Problemata Varia Anatomica* as 'the kind of source upon which fifteenth century scientists and physicians still depended for anatomical and physiological information' (p. 2), and this is confirmed for example by Hieronymus Capivaccio; see note 131. Cf. Blair, 'The Problemata as a Natural Philosophical Genre'. For the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Problems* see above, notes 41, 43, 44, 55. For their Latin diffusion, see also Aristotle, *Problemata physica*, ed. and trans. by Flashar, pp. 373–77.

124 Salmón, 'The Many Galens of the Medieval Commentators on Vision'.

125 Miranda-García and González Fernández-Corugedo, *Benvenutus Grassus' On the Well-Proven Art of the Eye*. Cf. Eldredge, 'A Thirteenth-Century Ophthalmologist, Benvenutus Grassus'. Further details on the influence of Benvenutus up to the mid-seventeenth century in Eldredge, 'The English Vernacular Afterlife of Benvenutus Grassus, Ophthalmologist'.

126 See in particular §§ 3–14, 35, 52, 72; Miranda-García and González Fernández-Corugedo, *Benvenutus Grassus' On the Well-Proven Art of the Eye*, pp. 186–211, 296–301, 370–75, 464–67; cf. ibid., pp. 28–30.

most widely distributed ophthalmology textbook and was translated into Italian and French.[127]

A quite similar situation is also found in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The Aristotelian intromission theory was still in a state of conflict with the Galenic extramission theory.[128] The anatomist Hieronymus (Girolamo) Capivaccio (Capodivacca) (1523–1589, Padua) explicitly opted for the Galenic theory in the physiological part of his *Opera Omnia*. For him, it represents a perfect compromise between Aristotle and Plato in that it incorporates both, since vision takes place through both extramission and also intromission.[129] Namely: when we are simply gazing, we are receptive and no extramission is necessary. However, when we look at something attentively, then we see by means of extramission. (This is an interesting distinction in relation to the act of looking during Christian image worship and recalls the distinction made by Albertus Magnus cited above.[130]) And to further weaken the contradiction between Galenic and Aristotelian visual theory, Capivaccio also attributes extramission to Aristotle, referring to his *Problemata*.[131]

Finally, the extent to which the Galenic theory of vision persisted among physicians and among oculists in particular is seen in their approach to spectacles, which had already been in use since the late thirteenth century.[132] Few writers make any reference to these in their texts. Others, such as Hieronymus Mercurialis (Gerolamo Mercurialie, 1530–1606, Padua) and Petrus Forestus (Pieter van Foreest, 1521–1597, Leiden), explain the way in which spectacles work not by refraction of the light rays entering, but rather — in agreement with the Galenic theory of vision — by the concentration or scattering of emitted *visual spirits* or visual rays by the curvature of the glass, or due to its porous quality.[133] Johannes Heurnius (1543–1601, Leiden), comparing spectacles with the fiery crystalline body (the lens), considers that spectacles

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127 Petrus Hispanus, *Liber de Oculo*, Cap. I. § 2; Petrus Hispanus, *Die Ophtalmologie (liber de oculo)*, ed. and trans. by Berger, esp. p. 3. Daly and Yee, 'The Eye Book of Master Peter of Spain', English translation pp. 124–45, esp. pp. 124–25. Lindberg, *A Catalogue of Medieval and Renaissance Optical Manuscripts*, pp. 111–14. By contrast, the natural-science text *Scientia Libri de Anima*, also attributed to Petrus Hispanus, explicitly rejects the (Galenic) extramission theory of vision in order to follow the Aristotelian intromissive position. Petrus Hispanus, *Scientia Libri de Anima*, ed. by Alonso, pp. 230–31. It is still a matter of controversy whether or not Petrus the philosopher and Petrus the physician-pope were one and the same person or two different individuals. See Daly and Yee, 'The Eye Book of Master Peter of Spain', n. 5.

128 See in particular Vanagt, 'Early Modern Medical Thinking on Vision and the Camera Obscura', esp. pp. 573–78.

129 In agreement with Alhazen in the version that appeared in the first printed edition of his *Thesaurus opticae*. See below, note 139.

130 See above, note 108.

131 Vanagt, 'Early Modern Medical Thinking on Vision and the Camera Obscura', pp. 574–75.

132 Vanagt, 'Suspicious Spectacles'.

133 Vanagt, 'Suspicious Spectacles', pp. 122–25. Cf. also the Zurich physician Conrad Gessner (Conradus Gesnerus, Gesner; 1516–1565); cited in Koelbing, *Renaissance der Augenheilkunde*, pp. 62–63.

were able to strengthen the weakened *visual spirit* of older people because their smooth, shining surface enhances the fiery visual spirit being emitted by giving it additional light. In younger people, by contrast, this could lead to injury to the visual power.[134] For this and similar 'Galenic' reasons, other authors also completely dismiss the use of spectacles — such as the Saxon physician Georg Bartisch (1535–1606), who instead prefers to strengthen the visual spirit using precious stones and medicinal herbs.[135]

The Invention of Linear Perspective Does Not Presuppose a Paradigm Shift from Extramission to Intromission

My third argument for the continued dominance of the visual ray theory is the fact that the fifteenth-century inventors of linear perspective offer no signs that in developing it, they were following on from the perspectivist intromission paradigm. Leon Battista Alberti, we are told, obtained the hint for his definition of the picture plane as a section through the visual pyramid, modelled on a window plane, from the perspectivists' optical knowledge and their new paradigm.[136] Yet he avoided siding with any particular visual theory and (in the Latin edition of his treatise on painting) only remarked that 'among the ancients [nota bene] there was considerable dispute as to whether these rays emerge from the surface or from the eye. This truly difficult question, which is quite without value for our purpose, may here be set aside'.[137]

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134 Vanagt, 'Suspicious Spectacles', p. 125.

135 Bartisch, *Ophthalmoduleia, das ist Augendienst*, fol. 31ʳ.

136 See for example above, note 95.

137 Alberti, *De Pictura*, i. 5; Alberti, *On Painting and On Sculpture*, ed. and trans. by Grayson, p. 41. Alberti also dismissed the problem of where exactly the act of vision occurs (also only in the Latin version): 'This is not the place to argue whether sight rests at the juncture of the inner nerve of the eye, or whether images are created on the surface of the eye, as it were in an animate mirror. I do not think it necessary here to speak of all the functions of the eye in relation to vision.' Alberti, *De Pictura*, i. 6; ibid., p. 41. It should be noted that Alberti appears to have no idea that according to the perspectivists, the visual image is formed in the crystalline fluid *inside* the eye. Instead, his formulation suggests more the reception theory of the atomists of antiquity, who used the reflection seen on the surface of the eye as evidence for their theory. For the preceding fourteenth century, we only have a single source for the question of what artists thought about the visual process: at the end of the fourteenth century, Cennino Cennini defines *disegno* as a 'power to see', which must be guided 'by the light of the sun, the light of your eye, and your own hand', if one is to work with *ragione*. And his instructions about painting buildings do not go beyond the poetic description of a row of columns with a vanishing point in Lucretius (*De Rerum Natura*, iv. 426–31) and do not offer any more detailed information about how or to what extent the vanishing lines are to be placed on the surface of the picture. Cennino Cennini, *Libro dell'arte*, Chapter VIII and LXXXVII; Cennino d'Andrea Cennini da Colle di Val d'Elsa, *Il Libro dell'Arte – The Craftsman's Handbook*, ed. and trans. by Thompson, i, pp. 5 and 55, ii (translation), pp. 5 and 56–57.

Elsewhere, however, his preference for the visual ray theory is expressed — for example, immediately before the passage just cited, where Alberti speaks of 'visual rays' that 'stick' to what is seen:

> Let us […] start from the opinion of philosophers who say that surfaces are measured by certain rays, ministers of vision as it were, which they therefore call visual rays, since by their agency the images of things are impressed upon the senses. These rays, stretching between the eye and the surface seen, move rapidly with great power and remarkable subtlety, penetrating the rare and transparent bodies until they encounter something dense or opaque where their points strike and they instantly stick.[138]

In any case, what Alberti means is that the theory of linear perspective needs nothing else as a basis but the visual pyramid. According to him, we do not need to analyse the direction of the visual ray, or the purpose that the seeing eye ought to serve. And Euclid's visual pyramid is in fact, in his view, a sufficient basis for developing a linear perspective depiction. The perspectivists are not needed for the purpose, and certainly not an intromissive model of vision. Accordingly it is only Euclid to whom Alberti refers several times in the first book of his treatise.[139] The same applies to Piero della Francesca's *De prospettiva*

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138   And he continues: 'Let us imagine the rays, like extended very fine threads gathered tightly in a bunch at one end, going back together inside the eye where lies the sense of sight. There they are like a trunk of rays from which, like straight shoots, the rays are released and go out towards the surface in front of them.' Alberti, *De Pictura*, i. 5; Alberti, *On Painting and On Sculpture*, ed. and trans. by Grayson, p. 41. Vitruvius takes a quite similar position, incidentally, in his treatise on architecture, which Alberti may have had in mind here. In *De Architectura Libri Decem*, vi. 2. 3, Vitruvius argues that, whether *simulacra* come into the eye or rays are emitted by it, we may be deceived by sight in the same way. As the term 'simulacra' suggests, Vitruvius was also thinking of the atomistic theory of vision here. However, other passages show that he supported the extramission theory; see for example iii. 3. 13 and iv, prooemium, 11.

139   Alberti owned Euclid's *Elements* in an Italian translation, as notes in his own hand show. See Cardini, *Leon Battista Alberti*, pp. 395–96. There is no direct evidence that he also owned Euclid's *Optics*, but several Latin and Italian versions were available in Florence in the fifteenth century. See Lindberg, *A Catalogue of Medieval and Renaissance Optical Manuscripts*, pp. 46–56. The same also applies to the following treatises on perspective. Pietro Accolti, two centuries later, still mentions extramission and intromission theories as alternatives; however, since they both use the same visual pyramid, there is no need to decide in favour of one or the other; Pietro Accolti, *Lo inganno degl'occhi*, ch. 1. In what follows (based on Euclid's *Optics*), the idea of the rays emanating from the eye is assumed for the sake of simplicity. By setting the position of the eye and drawing 'visual rays' to the objects being depicted, the perspective structures implicitly convey the model of the emission theory — and were probably read by artists as implying the visual ray theory. Treatises on practical measurements and mathematics take a similar approach. See Frangenberg, 'Egnatio Danti's Optics'; Dupré, 'Printing Practical Mathematics'; Büttner, 'Das messende Auge'. In his often-quoted and well-known eulogy to the art of the future, even Bacon himself refers to Euclid as its guarantor: Bacon, *Opus Majus*, ed. by Bridges, i, 210–12; translated for example in Tachau, 'Seeing as Action and Passion', pp. 354–55. Although Alhazen in his *Optics* had completely discredited the theory of visual rays, the first and only printed edition, published

pingendi, dating from *c.* 1472. Here again, only Euclid is cited, and this time explicitly his *Optics*.[140] And once again he includes formulations that appear to presuppose extramissive visual rays.[141]

The only one who explicitly refers not only to the ancient mathematical tradition but also to the medieval perspectivist tradition is Lorenzo Ghiberti. His *Third Commentary* of *c.* 1450, which survives in a single fragmentary copy, is a patchwork of excerpts and paraphrases from ancient and medieval treatises, the most important of which are those of Vitruvius, Alhazen, Bacon, Pecham, and Witelo.[142] It has repeatedly been argued that Ghiberti — by expounding the new paradigm of the Arabic-Aristotelian intromission theory — wanted to reveal the optical foundations of linear perspective as conceived by Alberti.[143] Yet Ghiberti's explanations remain unconnected with the rules of linear perspective composition. No connection is made between them and his own artistic practice or that of his colleagues, and there is no reference to Alberti's *costruzione legittima*. The writings of Biagio Pelacani and Pseudo-Toscanelli's *Delle Prospettiva* are not taken into account; nor is Euclid mentioned.

In my opinion, Ghiberti in his *Third Commentary* only intended to ennoble the practice of linear perspective composition and to make it — *ex post* — into a 'scientific method'. He had already pursued a similar goal in the introductory first commentary, which was intended, using a deliberate selection of certain passages from Vitruvius and Pliny, to persuade the reader

in 1572, did not put an end to the extramission theory of vision. The editor, Friedrich Risner, divided the work into sections and gave each a title. He gave the title 'Vision seems to occur through "synaugeia", that is, rays simultaneously received and emitted' to Section 24 of Book i. Alhazen, *Opticae thesaurus*, ed. by Risner, p. 15. The text that follows in that section states 'that both schools of thought [presumably extramission and intromission] speak the truth and that both beliefs are correct and consistent; but one does not suffice without the other, and there can be no sight except through that which is maintained by both schools of thought' (ibid.; quoted after Lindberg, 'Alhazen's Theory of Vision and its Reception in the West', p. 326). In this and the preceding Section 23, however, Alhazen had nowhere asserted the existence of visual rays emanating from the eye. He only conceded that mathematicians concerned with the geometrical analysis of vision and its phenomena may continue to speak of visual rays if that simplifies their work. Lindberg concludes, 'The novelty of Alhazen's theory of vision had no influence on traditional geometrical optics; not only can geometrical optics be pursued without commitment to any particular theory of vision, but Alhazen was even willing to allow "mathematicians" to continue to express themselves in terms of the discredited emission theory'. Lindberg, 'Alhazen's Theory of Vision and its Reception in the West', esp. p. 330.

140 Piero della Francesca, *De prospettiva pingendi*, ed. by Nicco-Fasola, pp. 69, 75, 76, 211. Cf. Folkerts, 'Piero della Francesca and Euclid', esp. pp. 305–06.

141 Piero della Francesca, *De prospettiva pingendi*, ed. by Nicco-Fasola, pp. 96–99. Cf. Baxandall, *Words for Pictures*, pp. 152–56; and Camerota, 'Come Apelle, nel nome di Euclide'.

142 Ghiberti, *Der dritte Kommentar*, ed. by Bergdolt, Introduction, pp. xiii–xcvi. Cf. Federici-Vescovini, 'Il problema delle fonti ottiche medievali del Commentario III di Lorenzo Ghiberti'; and Federici-Vescovini, 'Alhazen vulgarisé'.

143 See for example White, *The Birth and Rebirth of Pictorial Space*, pp. 126–30.

that the great artists of antiquity were knowledgeable not only practically but also theoretically.[144]

Extramissive elements are also ultimately mixed into the presentation of the visual process in Ghiberti (along with his models in Bacon and Pecham): following a detailed and explicit dismissal of any form of extramission with Alhazen, extramissive elements are reintroduced with Pecham and an appeal to Aristotle, with the contradiction being left unresolved.[145] Elsewhere, Ghiberti writes, in agreement with Bacon and referring to Aristotle, that in the case of those who are sick or inebriated, as a result of condensation of the air due to the vapours of tears and other emanations, the visual rays emanating from the eyes are reflected back to the eyes as if in a mirror (mirrors are the subject of the section concerned), so that the person affected sees an image of himself.[146]

The best description of the way in which Renaissance artists understood the act or process of seeing is probably found in the sculptor and architect Antonio di Pietro Averlino, who called himself Filarete — who according to Giorgio Vasari was Ghiberti's student and assisted him in work on the first baptistry door. Unlike Alberti, Filarete had had no formal humanist education and had learnt his art by doing. He was also far from having any of Ghiberti's and Piero's scholarly pretensions. In his architectural treatise, written around 1460, Filarete shows that he never heard of the possibility that the eye needs to receive something in order for sight to happen. Expounding the rules of perspective, he also explains his conception of vision, which proves to be the familiar old visual ray theory — and nothing else:

> Before I tell you this [foreshortening], it is necessary to understand sight and how you measure with it the thing seen. The philosophers say that every surface seen is measured with the eye by means of rays. They say that they are like the finest thread. It is thought that you have rays in your eyes which strike the surface seen, whether it be one or more. I will give you an example of these rays. I think they are similar to this. They are like those from a candle or other shining object. By closing and then opening your eyes a little, the (rays) depart from the candle. These are certain rays that spread out toward you. One seems to be in the middle. They say the visual rays are like this. There are many kinds of them, intrinsic, extrinsic, and median. The centric is the one that always rests on a certain point of the surface seen. These act like the above simile, that is, as the rays from the light seem to be moving continually from the object to your sight

144 Ghiberti, *I commentarii*, ed. by Bartoli, pp. 45–82. Cf. von Schlosser, *Leben und Meinungen des Florentinischen Bildners Lorenzo Ghiberti*, pp. 169–73.
145 Ghiberti, *Der dritte Kommentar*, ed. by Bergdolt, pp. 198, 200, 202.
146 Ghiberti, *Der dritte Kommentar*, ed. by Bergdolt, pp. 394, 396, 398, partly incomprehensible discussions. Aristotle, *Meteorologia*, iii. 4. 373 b 5–10. Ghiberti appeals to Book iii of the *Metaphysics*, but this can only be a copying error from his source in Bacon (or a scribal error). Cf. above, notes 53 and 105.

and return from it, so the rays from our eyes behave with the thing seen. […] Thus the rays draw to the eyes the observed surface, whatever its quality may be, and the eye carries this to the intellect in such a way that you can know what this thing is. […] Much more could be said about these rays.[147]

Finally, in the late fifteenth century, Leonardo da Vinci in his manuscripts provides clear evidence for both positions. Although Leonardo usually argues on the basis of rays (or 'images') that pass from the object to the eye, in other passages he assumes the idea of a visual ray that emanates from the eye. For example, in a leaf in the *Codex Atlanticus* dating from 1491 at the latest, he writes, 'I say that the power of vision extends by means of visual rays as far as the surface of bodies which are not transparent, and that the power possessed by these bodies extends up to the power of vision'.[148] To justify this model, Leonardo refers to phenomena that had been passed down in tradition since antiquity, such as the gaze of the wolf that causes muteness or the deadly gaze of the basilisk, as well as the transference of love through the gaze.[149] I am in agreement with David Lindberg, who suggested that Leonardo did so sequentially, first adhering to the visual ray theory and later rejecting it.[150]

I would conclude that the invention and practice of linear perspective during the Renaissance is not due to a shift in the optical paradigm. The perspectivists' intromission theory was not a necessary prerequisite for the

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147 Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Codex Magliabecchianus, Lib. XXI, fol. 176^{r-v}; Filarete, *Trattato di architettura*, ed. by Finoli and Grassi, ii, 647–48; Filarete, *Treatise on Architecture*, ed. and trans. by Spencer, i, 300–301.

148 Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Codex Atlanticus, fol. 262^r; Leonardo da Vinci, *The Notebooks*, ed. by MacCurdy, i, 223.

149 Leonardo da Vinci, *The Notebooks*, ed. by MacCurdy, i, 224. Cf. for example Leonardo da Vinci, *The Literary Works*, ed. and trans. by Richter, i, 171 (Windsor Castle, Royal Library, Anatomical Drawings, fol. 19148^v).

150 Lindberg, *Theories of Vision*, pp. 154–68. Cf. also Smith, 'Reflections on the Hockney-Falco Theses', pp. 180–82, who has drawn attention in a general way to the only partial, selective, and instrumental knowledge of or interest in the perspectivists among Renaissance artists such as Alberti and Leonardo and to the fact that although Leonardo quotes the perspectivists' intromission model, the model of the eye that he assumes (and records graphically) is not that of the perspectivists with a flat lens at the front but the Galenian model of the ophthalmologists, according to which the lens (the crystalloid body) is a round body located at the centre of the eye. Cf. also Eastwood, 'Alhazen, Leonardo, and Late-Medieval Speculations on the Inversion of Images in the Eye'. Sources providing evidence of the survival of the extramission theory tend to increase in the sixteenth century, rather than decrease. The theory received a fresh impetus from Florentine Neoplatonism following Marsilio Ficino, and from there it occasionally even found its way into art theory — as seen in Michelangelo (*Rime*), Gian Paolo Lomazzo (*Trattato delle pittura*, 1590), and Gregorio Comanini (*Il Figino*, 1591). See Hub, 'Material Gazes and Flying Images'; Weststeijn, 'Painting's Enchanting Poison'; Weststeijn, 'Seeing and the Transfer of Spirits in Early Modern Art Theory'. Cf. also Hub, 'Aristotle's "Bloody Mirror" and Natural Science', pp. 59–62. Publication of the first printed edition of Alhazen's *Optics* in 1572 also by no means put an end to the extramission theory; see above, note 139.

discovery of linear perspective. The few discussions or mentions of it on the part of artists were motivated instead by an effort to enhance the status of their own craft by presenting evidence of its theoretical, geometrical, and mathematical basis, or — as in Leonardo — from a desire to find out how vision takes place, independently of artistic practice. In the same way that the *absence* of a science of optics in antiquity cannot be held responsible for the absence of linear perspective,[151] the *presence* of a science of optics during the Renaissance cannot be held responsible for the presence of linear perspective in art. The art of creating a spatial representation that corresponds to the visual image developed independently of the science of optics. In both cases, the reasons for the choice or non-choice of linear perspective must be inferred from the implications of the use or non-use of perspective in artistic production and from the behaviour of the viewers of art works — although these are matters beyond the scope of the present study.

Nor can it be claimed for the late Middle Ages that the change in the production and reception of art (in the practice of piety) is connected with the prevalence or non-prevalence of the visual ray theory. As we have seen, there are no grounds for identifying any climax or downfall, or even any weakening, of the visual ray theory in the thirteenth, fourteenth, or fifteenth centuries (and not even in the sixteenth).

Conclusion

The starting point for this inquiry was the tradition in art history that characterizes (late) medieval piety as 'visual piety' and in the process describes contemporary theories of vision in ways that are so diffuse, inadequate, and occasionally even inaccurate that sometimes the extramission theory and sometimes the intromission theory is considered to be responsible for one and the same phenomenon.

The aim of the discussion that followed was quite modest. The intention was to let the sources for historic conceptions of vision speak for themselves in detail, in order to obtain a more solid basis in relation to theories of vision for future research on the connection between vision and the production and reception of art in the Middle Ages. The aim was to clarify which of the two theories — the extramission or the intromission theory — needs to be assumed here; in other words, whether a paradigm shift occurred during the Middle Ages in this respect by comparison with antiquity. The conclusion is that there was no change in the way in which vision was understood, or at least there was no generally accepted new conception. The theory of the visual ray or visual rays from antiquity never lost its validity — not among scholars, and certainly not among the uneducated.

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151   Hub, *Die Perspektive der Antike*.

I would propose the following position: if we wish to know how people interpreted the act of seeing during the Middle Ages, we first need to seek out the interfaces at which people learn from science (regardless of their level of education) — in the explanations given for eye diseases, for example. Secondly, it is necessary to consult sources that mention things that did actually concern ordinary people, no matter what their educational level was: all the areas that we erroneously regard as representing superstition but which nevertheless have roots in natural-scientific explanations, such as the evil eye, the gaze of love, or the transference of disease through the gaze.

As I have tried to show, people up to the fifteenth century and beyond had every reason to regard vision as a sacramental act. The visual ray extended the body and enabled the beholder to touch what was seen directly, physically. The gaze created a corporeal link between the beholder and the Host, the relic, or the image. And this link was like a lifeline that was able to transmit strength, virtue, and salvation to the beholder. I am by no means claiming that medieval conceptions of the process of vision always applied or were effective when images were gazed at or looked at, but only that this was *one possibility*, which needs to be taken seriously by all those who are concerned with the production and reception of images during the Middle Ages.

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WENDY M. K. SHAW

Fortress of Form, Robber of Consciousness

Theorizing Visuality in Islam

The funny thing is that the trope of the veiled woman has become perhaps the most universally recognizable and most frequently controversial symbol for a religion renowned for two things: the subjugation of women and aniconism. It is as if Islam has come to define itself — not only externally, in its so-called *dar al-harb* (realm of struggle/war) outside the protected domain of faith, but internally — through practices that restrict both vision and two forms of representation within it: imagistic and social. When viewed through the lens of neither the present nor the mythologized classical Islamic past in which these traditions of veiling and representation covalently emerged, but in the diachronic discursive intertextuality in which both religious and cultural traditions reside, nothing is quite as it appears in the political discourse which has enveloped contemporary representations of Islam. Far from invisible, divinity becomes immanently present through form; and far from subjugated, woman is revealed as one of the primary signs through which to perceive God. The seemingly disparate taboos against the visibility of woman and the visual representation of the divine emerge instead as the veil between creator and created suggesting the parameters of Islamic visuality.

Islamic Visuality: From Prohibition to Taboo

Although both veiling and imagistic representation are often conceived as governed by proscription, the foundational texts directing Islamic legal interpretation provide no explicit mandates governing these practices. Thus both practices might be better considered under the rubric of taboo, a shift in terminology that enables a reconsideration of religious practice from one of doctrine to one of discourse. This shift depends on understanding the

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engagement of Islamic law with its foundational texts. Islamic law emerges through a system of debate rooted in interpretation of two compilations: the *Qur'an*, composed of the compiled revelations of the Prophet Muhammad, and the *Hadith*, narratives of the words and deeds of the Prophet related by his companions for the emulation of his followers, and compiled a century after his death. However, the role of each in establishing doctrine depends heavily on interpretative intermediaries through which traditions such as those of veiling and apparent aniconism have emerged.

Although the Qur'an is understood by Muslims to be the direct word of God as revealed to the Prophet Muhammad, both the notion of it as a book and the precision of its meanings are inherently multiple. The word *Qur'an* itself means recitation or reading, with reference to both the aural process of its revelation and its transmission. As such, its meaning and the Islamic perception of its insurmountable perfection lie as much in its sonic as in its hermeneutic qualities.[1] Yet the Qur'an also refers to itself as *kitab*, which can be translated as book, but encompasses meanings ranging 'from the divine inventory of all creation to the eschatological record of every deed'.[2] This ambiguity about what constitutes the Qur'an befits the postulate of the incomprehensibility of the divine itself: just as God cannot fit into the human mind, the word of God cannot fit into human categories. The Qur'an acknowledges this, explaining self-reflexively,

> Some of its verses are definite in meaning — these are the mother of the Scripture — and others are ambiguous. The perverse at heart eagerly pursue the ambiguities in their attempt to make trouble and to pin down a specific meaning of their own: only God knows the true meaning. Those firmly grounded in knowledge say, 'We believe in it: it is all from our Lord' — only those with real perception will take heed.[3]

Believed to be the holy word of God, for Muslims the Qur'an is untranslatable, and the rendition of the text into other languages is often considered as interpretation. Yet translation also raises ambiguities inherent to all enunciations, even in their original language, through which all reading is inherently interpretive. In this passage, the direct translation of the word *Um* meaning literally 'mother', is often suppressed in favour of greater English clarity, resulting in the use of 'decisive' (Shakir), 'substance' (Pickthall), 'basic or fundamental' (Yusuf Ali), or 'cornerstone' (Haleem). However, this also suppresses the gendered notion of the mother as the basis of all that is *muhkamat*, rendered as 'clear' (McAuliffe),[4] 'decisive' (Shakir), 'fundamental' (Yusuf Ali), or 'definite' to the text. Derived from the root *h-k-m*, pertaining

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1   McAuliffe, *The Cambridge Companion to the Quran*, pp. 6, 41.
2   McAuliffe, *The Cambridge Companion to the Quran*, p. 2.
3   *The Qur'an*, trans. by Haleem, p. 34.
4   McAuliffe, *The Cambridge Companion to the Quran*, p. 3.

to divine wisdom, the word might also suggest sections that are ordained. Yet, as with (maternal) biological inheritance, the differentiation of the ordained from the 'ambiguous' traits is itself ambiguous, enabling all parts of the Qur'an to potentially be simultaneously fixed and unstable. Indeed, while one subsequent verse states that all verses are 'ambiguous' (Q 39. 23), another states that they are all 'clear' (Q 11. 1). Moreover, the word for 'ambiguous', *mutashabih*, is also understood as meaning 'similar' with reference to those verses that repeat, resemble, and confirm each other, proving the miraculous quality of the text.[5] Like Schrödinger's cat, the verses can only become fixed or unstable through interpretation. This becomes clear through the more common rendition of the term *mutashabih* not as 'ambiguous', but as 'allegorical', implying a clear narrative rooted in metaphor that can be teased out of the text based on a particular competence. Indeed, while Nasr Abu Zayd's interpretation of the history of the verses suggests that they were revealed as part of the differentiation between the Christian belief in the divine nature of Jesus and Islamic interpretation of him as fully human, the verse also played a key role in determining the parameters of Qur'anic interpretation during the era of the rationalist Mu'tazilite controversy of the eighth–tenth centuries.[6] The acknowledgement of such competence has differed widely throughout the history of Islam, with numerous controversies about the legitimacy of various interpretive modes continuing into the present era.[7] Conversely, some commentators object to the clarification of the ambiguous verses, arguing that true understanding of them can only be reserved for God.[8]

Like the Qur'an, the Hadith also has numerous sources of ambiguity. Often various renditions of similar events, such as the Prophet's response to his wife Aisha's use of a curtain with images, have resulted in conflicting scholarly interpretations. Likewise, it is not clear whether actions and statements pertaining to a particular historical moment, such as the Prophet enjoining his wives to cover at the marketplace so as not to attract excessive attention, have universal applicability.[9] Moreover, as the Prophet is not divine but exemplary as the chosen one for God's revelation, the Qur'an does not enjoin his followers to follow him so much as, through him as messenger (*rusul*), follow the word of God.

Nonetheless, long traditions of interpretation from Qur'an and the Hadith have formed the primary basis of the multiple schools and interpretations of Islamic law as idealized (*sharia*) and as emerging from precedent (*fiqh*) that continue to govern modern Islamic notions of doctrine. Yet as no interpretation is absolute, and all depend on their historical circumstances across a wide

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5   Kinberg, 'Ambiguous', pp. 70–71.
6   Abu Zayd, *Rethinking the Qur'an*, pp. 14, 33.
7   Albertini, 'The Seductiveness of Certainty'.
8   Kinberg, 'Ambiguous', p. 73.
9   'Isa and Harold, 'Muslims and Taswir', p. 253.

temporal and geographical span, such doctrine might be better conceived as a discursive formation that enables a hegemonic claim to truth outside of time or place, although actually emerging and varying through history. As Michel Foucault points out, religious doctrine functions as discourse, engaging in 'a dual subjugation, that of speaking subjects to discourse, and that of the discourse to the group, and at least virtually, of speakers'.[10] While within the modern era, adherents of other monotheistic scriptural religions such as Judaism and Christianity have developed vocabularies for collective subject positions that do not exclude subjects who do not strictly adhere to doctrinal discourses, Islam has increasingly been defined, both externally and internally, through 'fundamentalist' adherents who exclude modernist/secularist or historically central mystical variants.[11] Thus Muslims who speak outside the field of Islamic discursive authority become as invalid as speakers within that discourse as non-Muslims: we lose our religion, and within it, our right to speak. Repeated attempts to elucidate or disprove the validity of injunctions against representation or viewing the female form prove futile in their recourse to foundational texts, not because of incorrect citation but because their discourse elides interpretive authority.[12] Modern fundamentalist Islamic discourse in particular tends to view Islam in a holistic manner that refuses Western modalities of understanding Islam as well as denying the validity of historical development by demanding a return to the golden age of the Prophet through purification of the degeneration that has taken place over the course of history.[13]

However, by understanding these practices less as religious prohibitions than as cultural taboos, a new discursive field emerges in which cultural discourse, rather than foundational texts, serves as 'mother' of interpretation. As Sigmund Freud explains in bringing the term *taboo* into modern terminology,

> Taboo restrictions are distinct from religious or moral prohibitions. They are not based upon any divine ordinance, but may be said to impose themselves on their own account. They differ from moral prohibitions in that they fall into no system that declares quite generally that certain abstinences must be observed and gives reasons for that necessity. Taboo prohibitions have no grounds and are of unknown origin. Though they are unintelligible to *us*, to those who are dominated by them they are taken as a matter of course.[14]

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10 Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, p. 226.
11 Albertini, 'The Seductiveness of Certainty'; Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds*.
12 Grabar, *The Formation of Islamic Art*; Paret, 'Textbelege zum islamischen Bilderverbot'; Naef, *Bilder und Bilderverbot im Islam*; Freyer Stowasser, *Women in the Qur'an*; 'Isa and Harold, 'Muslims and Taswir'.
13 Appleby, 'History in the Fundamentalist Imagination'.
14 Freud, *Totem and Taboo and Other Works*, p. 18.

The suppression of the image and of female form suggests taboo rather than prohibition because, not based in scripture, they emerge from common acceptance of their truth that is enforced through cultural repetition. What's more, a taboo is perceived as absolute from within a culture, and only emerges as unnecessary when viewed from outside, the 'us' of which Freud speaks. Thus both practices only seem exceptional when compared with cultures that do not engage in these practices. Indeed, from its moment of inception, injunctions against the use of images as part of Islamic worship emerged in contradistinction to the practices of other religions in the region, particularly the icons of Orthodox Christianity and the idols of the Arab tribes. Similarly, veiling in the Islamic world only became noteworthy when the continuation of the practice became exceptional in the modern world, as increasingly urbanized women in eastern and southern Europe removed their headkerchiefs and the universalization of European dress began to be perceived as a signal of modernity. The women who veiled in the late twentieth century became symbols of Islam in a manner that their nineteenth-century counterparts could never have been not because they were more religious, but because their veiling stood in the face of hegemonic forces expecting them to don the global uniform of modern fashion, understood as secular and egalitarian.

Yet both practices do more than totems in simply defining groups in contradistinction to others: they rely on taboos that define a particular relationship with the sacred. 'Properly speaking taboo includes only (a) the sacred (or unclean) character of persons or things, (b) the kind of prohibition which results from this character, and (c) the sanctity (or uncleanness) which results from a violation of the prohibition'.[15] Indeed, the Arabic terminology governing restrictions on both imagery and the female form relies on derivations from the root *h-r-m*, which can indicate both the sacred (as in the *Bayt al-Haram*, literally the house of the sacred, in reference to the Ka'aba, or the *harem*, the private zone of a home) and the profane or forbidden (*harram*, as in prohibitions of food or idolatry), both of which entail restrictions that pertain not to morality but to religious constructs.[16] Like the Qur'anic verses cited above, the idea of the taboo is itself ambiguous in that it simultaneously protects from both the sacred and the unclean, and its transgression is forbidden because it entails entry into ambiguously sacred/unclean territory. If we consider Islam not from its scriptural interpretation but from the cultural discourses that emerged in tandem with doctrinal interpretation during the high classical era, roughly the ninth through the fifteenth centuries, then the reinterpretation of the suppression of the image and the female form under the rubric of taboo implied by the root *hrm* destabilizes the binary established between notions of permissibility and sanction, enabling both practices to be simultaneously sacred and forbidden, and also neither sacred nor forbidden. This destabilization reveals implicit meanings underlying both the Islamic

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15 Freud, *Totem and Taboo and Other Works*, p. 19.
16 Wiederhold, 'Profane and Sacred', pp. 281–82.

image and the veil contravening their common understanding through dominant European paradigms of visuality.

Veiling the Divine in Islamic Representation

Discussions of Islamic art often treat the issue of figural representation as a special problem in which the frequency of representations of animate beings emerges as contravening religious sanctions that can be explained most effectively by distinguishing sacred and secular realms, such as that of the mosque, where representation is prohibited, and elite zones where representation was hidden from common eyes in palaces and manuscripts.[17] This perspective relies on several postulates: the hierarchical aesthetic division between representational and ornamental art current in Europe when Islamic art became of interest to collectors in the late nineteenth century; the association of non-pictorial form with abstraction rather than representation; and the ready dissociation of sacred and secular spaces and practices. On the contrary, both geometric and pictorial form were often invested with equally metaphysical meaning, suggesting that the extensive repertoire of representational religious subjects implies not a contravention of religious sanction but a misplaced assumption of the sanction itself — a misunderstanding less surprising as the only subfield in art history designated by religion avoids hermeneutics by constituting 'Islam' as a cultural category. As Ernst J. Grube points out, 'this "hidden" form of religious Islamic art is far more frequent than has generally been recognized, but it is a phenomenon almost totally inaccessible to the non-Persian reader or the non-Muslim; or to anybody not initiated into the subtleties of Sufism'.[18] Such explanation places the field in an awkward terminological bind. Islamic, as opposed to national art histories considered in Turkey, Egypt, or Iran, is largely a framework constructed through Western practices of collection, display, and academic analysis.[19] Externally defined, the field conflates an 'unwieldy' geographic and temporal span defined by religion only to quickly disavow the metaphysical discourses which might actually grant it coherence. As classical Islamic sources provide limited explicit theory of visuality or aesthetic theory that fit the expectations of modern analysts, Islamic art history generally avoids theorizing in its name, critiquing such attempts as ahistorical and non-contextual despite the integrity of the field's object of analysis implied in the term 'Islamic art' itself.[20] While it is indeed difficult to consistently prove the trajectory of intellectual history that links

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17 Brend, *Islamic Art*, p. 19; Grabar, *The Formation of Islamic Art*; Göçer, 'A Hypothesis Concerning the Character of Islamic Art'.
18 Grube, 'Religious Painting in the Islamic Period', p. 133.
19 Blair and Bloom, 'The Mirage of Islamic Art', p. 157.
20 Robinson, 'Gonzalez, *Beauty and Islam* (review)'; Roxburgh, 'Gonzalez, *Beauty and Islam* (review)'.

one Islamic thinker with another, the frequent repetition of tropes related to the visual across a wide range of what we might term 'genres' of Islamic texts — literary, historical, and religious — suggests a broad discursive realm in which consistent ideas of visuality and representation circulated which might be considered proper to a non-contextualized Islam nonetheless not binding on all contexts within it. The theorization of visuality offered here floats on the affinities of this realm, producing not an intellectual history of visuality theorized as such within Islam, but a meditation on how discourses of visuality as a perceptive mode emerge within this discursive realm.

Islamic visual discourse emerged within a philosophical environment deeply concerned with the relationship between perception and the divine. Having filtered Neoplatonic conceptions of the universe as conceived by Greek polytheist philosophers through a monotheistic lens, and defining itself in contradistinction to the dominant Iconistic culture of the Eastern Roman Empire, classical Islamic thought conceived of the sensible world as inherently imbued with divine potential.[21] This was expressed through the development of complex geometric pattern, *girih*, which held the potential for infinite repeatability and transmutability to large-scale architectural forms and ultimately the cosmos itself. Although rooted in the same postulates of Euclidean geometry, rather than looking through the image towards represented reality, as in perspectival perception, the viewer experiences representation of divine order through the limitless nodes and intricacies of an isotropic plane. Far from abstract, such pattern was understood as fully mimetic in its representation of the divine order ideally embodied in nature, conceived as the embodied reflection of divine perfection.[22] Parallel understandings also emerge through metaphors of human beauty, love, and even lust in poetry, the manuscript painting which explicated and intertwined with the poetic tradition, and the poetic explication of such paintings. Rather than understanding these two modes of representation, the geometric and the figural, as separate practices, Islamic discourses of representation suggest that they mutually enable the perception of divine immanence through complementary and often juxtaposed paths.

Contrary to common perceptions of representation as forbidden in Islam, rooted in various interpretations of the Hadith literature, in the classic narratives of Persian literature that have defined wide swathes of Islamic culture, images often serve as a passage from transgression to transcendence, indicating their function as a taboo rather than a prohibition.[23] This apparent inconsistency suggests the paradox of Satan expressed in Sufi thought. Satan's sin is his refusal to bow down to Adam in fear of contravening God's command to worship

21 King, 'Islam, Iconoclasm, and the Declaration of Doctrine'; Göçer, 'A Hypothesis Concerning the Character of Islamic Art'.
22 Necipoğlu, *The Topkapı Scroll*, pp. 117, 154, 166; Gonzalez, *Beauty and Islam*, p. 18.
23 Grabar, *The Formation of Islamic Art*.

no others. Yet Satan incurs God's wrath, because in doing so he implies that Adam exists through some power other than God, and thus his obedience is transformed into sacrilege and he is cast from heaven.[24] The Story of Sheikh San'an, related in Farid ad-Din Attar's twelfth-century *Conference of the Birds*, allegorizes this paradox through a confrontation between the Islamic and Byzantine world. The elderly and devout Sheikh San'an of Mecca begins to see dreams in which he lives in Constantinople and bows before idols. Horrified, he decides he must travel to the city in order to uncover the meaning of his dreams. He falls in love with a Christian princess standing on a balcony when the veil of her hair lifts from her face. She requires him to forswear Islam by drinking alcohol, praying to icons, and becoming a swineherd. Unable to convince him to renounce his apostasy and repent, his disciples eventually leave and return to Mecca, where another devout sheikh admonishes them for deserting their master in his hour of need and leads them all back. After fasting and praying for forty days, he sees a vision of the Prophet who promises to redeem Sheikh San'an, who returns to Mecca to die in God's favour.[25] The story warns against excessive pride in fulfilling the demands of scripture, suggesting that it is only through the acknowledgement of icons, which also allow limited perception of the infinite, that one can emerge with a still stronger perception of the ultimate boundlessness of the Islamic divine.[26]

Indeed, throughout the Islamic literary tradition, discussions of representation suggest a conception of the function of the representational image akin to that of abstraction as a mode of divine apprehension. Tales related by the eleventh-century philosopher al-Ghazali and the thirteenth-century mystic Jelal ad-Din Rumi not only suggest the close affinity between the Islamic and Hellenic perceptive traditions, but also reframe that tradition in new terms. According to al-Ghazali, a king once solved a dispute between two groups of artists, identified as Greek and Chinese, by arranging a competition between them in which each group would paint one side of a room divided by a curtain. While the Greek artists took avail of the best paints and brushes, the Chinese artists did without. When the Greeks announced that they were finished, the king was impressed by their mastery, but equally bewildered by the Chinese announcement that they too had completed their work. When the curtain was lifted, a polished wall 'sparkled with all the wondrous designs of the Byzantines, but with even more dawnlike splendor and lightning sheen: for they had so polished their wall that it shone like unto a mirror, and in beauty all the more brilliant'.[27] Three centuries later, Rumi repeats

24 Michael Barry attributes this interpretation to ibn Arabi (1165–1240) in *Figurative Art in Medieval Islam*, p. 244. I have not found this discussion in the work of the highly influential twelfth-century mystical scholar ibn Arabi, but in the *Tawasin* of al-Hallaj (858–952). See *The Tawasin of Mansur al-Hallaj*, trans. by ar-Rahman at-Tarjumana, p. 12.

25 Farid ud-Din Attar, *The Conference of the Birds*, trans. by Davis and Darbandi, pp. 57–75.

26 Barry, *Figurative Art in Medieval Islam*, p. 128.

27 Barry, *Figurative Art in Medieval Islam*, p. 9.

the tale in his *Mesnevi*, switching the sides so that the Byzantines represent the mystics. While al-Ghazali emphasizes the importance of both types of knowledge — the practice of science and the purification of the mystical heart — Rumi clearly used the parable to reveal a hierarchy between a worldly and an other-worldly, even godly, mode of perception by prefacing the story with a parable about the Prophet:

> The Prophet said, 'There are some who see me
> By the same light in which I am seeing them.
> Our natures are one.
> Without reference to any strands
> of lineage, without reference to texts or traditions,
> we drink the life-water together'.[28]

The Prophet here appears not, as in a Hadith, as a historical eminence, but as a mystical figure who erases divisions such as lineage and tradition, giving preference to the multiplicity in unity favoured through the mystical concept of *wahdat al-wujud*, which indicates being in the sense of the absolute and nondelimited reality of God encompassing all multiplicity within oneness. While such a being is invisible within itself, we can perceive it through the created things that act as its veils. Thus we can imagine God as being one with all creation, and yet not encompassed by it, a concept encompassed by the phrase 'He/not He' (*huwa la huwa*). In order to understand this liminal state, ibn Arabi develops a concept of imaginal reality, in which 'reality is one that dwells in an intermediate domain between two other realities and shares the attributes of both sides', as in the relationship between the real and the images in a mirror or in a dream.[29] Far from decrying the use of the image, the parable suggests that the image is a necessary intermediary for perception of the divine within its reflection.

Similarly, the Islamic transformation of the tale of the competition between Zeuxis and Parhasius, related by the first-century scholar Pliny the Elder in his *Natural History*, reflects both the antique roots of Islamic visual culture and a shift in the understanding of visual perception in its translation from one culture to the other.

> In a contest between Zeuxis and Parhasius, Zeuxis produced so successful a representation of grapes that birds flew up to the stage buildings where it was hung. Then Parhasius produced such a successful *trompe-l'oeil* of a curtain that Zeuxis, puffed up with pride at the judgment of the birds, asked that the curtain be drawn aside and the picture revealed. When he realized his mistake, with an unaffected modesty he conceded the prize,

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28 *The Essential Rumi*, trans. by Barks, pp. 121–23.
29 Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds*, pp. 16–17, 24–25.

saying that whereas he had deceived birds, Parhasius had deceived him, an artist.[30]

For Jacques Lacan, the story points to the idea that representation fascinates not because it deceives, but because it promises more than it can deliver. The story suggests how sexual desire is manifest in visual terms, wherein the image serves as a lure that promises satisfaction, but never provides phallic mastery over its subject.[31]

By making the curtain real and replacing it with a mirror, the parable proposes a mode of vision that replaces truth in the space beyond representation with representation as a signal towards the infinite reflection of that which cannot be represented. This is the paradoxical space of the mirror, which depends on the image even as the viewer turns his or her back upon it: the further the gaze moves away from the painting and into the mystical space of the mirror, the closer the viewer comes to truth. The tantalizing absence behind the immovable curtain is replaced by the equally tantalizing and equally inaccessible space beyond the mirror which offers infinite absence rather than infinite presence. Moreover, rather than inviting direct communion with the image, such as between the birds and Zeuxis's grapes, or between a believer and the Godhead embodied in the Byzantine icon, since a viewer always sees him or herself in the mirror along with whatever lies behind, the mirror inserts the viewer between the image and its contemplation. As such, the viewer's own presence becomes part of the image. Thus rather than offering a meaning separated from the viewer located beyond the picture plane, irremediably other than the viewer and which can be subject to mastery, the image and the viewer become one, suggesting the ultimate goal of mystical Islam: union with the divine. Indeed, in mystical literature, the mirror often serves as a metaphor for the human heart. In such a reading, the polished mirror serves as the vision of transcendent reality acquired through worship.[32]

The eleventh-century scholar Ibn al-Haytham (Alhazen) differentiated between such profane and sacred modes of visuality in suggesting two modes for sight: glancing and contemplative. The first considers the kind of sight which recognizes and understands at a glance, such as in encountering a familiar face or a word seen so often it has become iconic. Contemplative sight, on the other hand, requires an interiorization of vision such as is created in the infinite movement of the gaze conditioned by a complex and infinitely repeating pattern.[33] With its infinite reproduction of the image, making it shimmer brighter than reality, the mirror in the mystic parable of the competition of the artists offers a refractive space of contemplation akin to that perceived through *girih* pattern. Such pattern merges with glass in the

30 Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, trans. by Healy, p. 330.
31 Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, Book xi, pp. 102–03.
32 Şeyh Galip, *Beauty and Love*, trans. by Holbrook, pp. xiii.
33 Necipoğlu, *The Topkapı Scroll*, p. 203.

Qur'anic parable of Solomon, which uses the transcendence of misrecognition enabled by glass as a metaphor for the recognition of truth beyond visuality. King Solomon invites the Queen of Sheba to his court, modelled as a garden and thus a metaphor for heaven, in order to show her the error of her ways in worshipping the sun rather than God. She must pass over a threshold paved with glass over water in which fish swim. As Valérie Gonzalez suggests, the description of the glass produces a 'sort of textual "icon", which "represents" an architectural feature one can enter, made with an overall glass setting, transparent, bright, white or green, isotropic, with a perceptible linear design', that conflates the isotropy of pattern with the deceptive nature of vision itself.[34] Fooled by the glass, she lifts her skirt to wade barefoot into the water, only to discover that she has been unable to see truth because of the misrepresentation of her own visual perception, which has similarly deceived her into being dazzled by the sun rather than worshipping the invisible God of Islam. Thus as in the Platonic tradition, visuality in general may be suspect in its production/recognition of false icons, but it serves as a bridge towards recognition of the invisible form of the divine.

Through a more direct trope of the idol added to a parable of divine love, the fifteenth-century theologian and poet Jami similarly uses the splendour of visuality as a bridge towards apperception of divine truth. His tale transforms a misogynistic tale from the book of Genesis that contrasts the sins of the (unnamed) wife of Potiphar against the purity of Joseph into one where the two sexes are equally prey to the twin taboos of the image and the flesh (Genesis 39). In Jami's rendition, smitten with lust for her servant, Potiphar's wife Zuleikha orders a palace built for his seduction. Reiterating the aesthetics of microcosm-to-macrocosm characterizing ideal form, the palace is embellished with 'lovely traces in thousands [that] sprang up there in tendrils' and vaults by the finest architects in the land. The palace decoration was completed with paintings depicting her and Joseph as lovers.

> Everywhere in this Hall, the image-maker
> Wrought a semblance of Joseph with a painting of Zulaykha
> Together seated as Beloved and Lover
> In love of soul's and heart's embrace:
> Here kissed he her lip,
> There she loosened his sash.

As Zuleikha expresses her passion once he enters her chamber, the paintings appear to multiply:

> So she made known her pain
> To Joseph and her lust –
> But Joseph glared as if within himself

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34   Gonzalez, *Beauty and Islam*, p. 36.

> And held aloof from fear of broil
> And stared down at the chamber's rug –
> And saw himself and her! in imagery depicted,
> Embroidered on the carpet's silk,
> Hugging each other, breast against her breasts –
> From such a picture, swift! He turned his glance
> And saw himself depicted everywhere:
> If he looked at the door, if he looked on the wall,
> He saw his cheek coupled to hers in twin roses:
> And lifted his face to his God in the heavens
> And saw the same scene on the ceiling.[35]

The infinite multiplication of the image suggests a dizzying hall of mirrors or a prism that depends on repetition to invoke the same kind of transcendent window into infinity as attributed to *girih*, thus extending the geometric vegetal motifs to architecture and then to painting. Just as for Joseph, the image of the beloved becomes dizzying, for Zuleikha, the lover himself becomes transcendent. Making literal her comparison of his brows to a *mihrab* in the course of her declamation of his beauty, Joseph calls on his role as prophet (suggested by his likening himself to a mirror) to transform her lust for the lover into lust for union with the divine.[36]

> Today embrace me not, nor hold me tight
> Nor with a stone presume to shatter
> my pure mirror bright […]
> By him without the like — when every like is His image,
> And all within, and all without, is His image![37]

The story hinges on her conversion to this dazzling vision of divinity, as she idolizes not only him, but an idol that she keeps in the palace. The day she plans to trap Joseph, she covers the idol's face with a cloth lest he witness her misbehaviour. Yet it is the presence of the idol that stops the prophet at the very moment that he is about to succumb to desire. When he learns what the cloth hides, he realizes that if she is ashamed in front of a material idol whose eyes can be veiled, then he should be all the more ashamed before an omniscient God whose eyes are immaterial and thus all-seeing. Thus the faith of even a devout prophet is strengthened by his encounter with an idolater. The world of medieval Islam, it would seem, may not have condoned devotion to idols, but it recognized them as a necessary counterpoint to intangible divinity.

Although its discussion in relation to the Prophet Muhammad himself is considered heretical, the incident of the so-called 'bird-verses' (dubbed the

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35   Barry, *Figurative Art in Medieval Islam*, pp. 204–06.
36   A *mihrab* is a niche indicating the direction of the Ka'aba Mecca towards which Muslims pray.
37   Barry, *Figurative Art in Medieval Islam*, p. 207.

'satanic verses' by the Scottish Orientalist William Muir) suggests that idols serve a liminal purpose in Islamic mythology even for the last in the line of prophets to which Joseph belongs. Muhammad's early biographers relate that during the recitation of one of the early suras of the Qur'an (the Star), Muhammad made a statement which undermined his message of absolute monotheism. In the Qur'an, the Prophet is said to have demanded that the '[Disbelievers] consider al-Lat and al-'Uzza, and the third, the other one, Manat' in a manner pointing to their nature as idols rather than as divinities (Q 53. 19–20).[38] In heretical versions, such as that related in Hisham al-Kalbi's eighth-century *Book of the Idols* concerning the worship of al-Uzza, the Prophet adds, 'These are the exalted *gharaniq* (probably meaning high-flying cranes), whose intercession is hoped for'.[39] If the story were considered true, by proposing their intercession, he thus would have admitted the reality of pre-Islamic gods and goddesses, pleasing the Meccans, who immediately accepted his teachings until he refuted this statement, as related in the Qur'an through the verse,

> We have never sent any messenger or prophet before you [Muhammad] into whose wishes Satan did not insinuate something, but god removes what Satan insinuates and then God affirms his message. (Q 22. 52)[40]

The story blasphemes in characterizing Muhammad as veering from the central tenet of Islam, monotheism, through the temptation of Satan. While the incident is included in early biographies of the Prophet, it disappeared from all canonical Hadith, since it contradicts the doctrine of *'isma*, the divine protection of Islam from mistakes. However, it also serves as a perfect example of the paradox of Satan: that only through the possibility of absolute error can truth become possible. For a believer, the problem is one of the veracity of the story, and thus the preservation of the canon. Yet for the purpose of analysis, the more salient point is the mythological persistence of a story that, in inducing doubt, induces the confirmation of faith, repeating the logic of the paradox of Satan. While medieval interpretations of the passage made some allowance for the fallibility of the Prophet that enabled such ambiguities, modern orthodoxy later declared such reports as a-historical and heretical.[41]

The prevalence of literary themes in which the perception of the divine depends on the transcendence of error rooted in idolatry suggests that far from sacrilegious, the taboo of idolatry functions as a key factor in the classical Islamic perception of the divine. Numerous stories of lover and beloved thus rely on idolatrous visions that transform into imaginal metaphors of theophany. The fourteenth-century poet Khwaju Kirman recounts how the Persian Prince

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38 *The Qur'an*, trans. by Haleem, p. 347.
39 Wessels, *A Modern Arabic Biography of Muhammad*, pp. 61–62; Hisham Ibn-al-Kalbi, *The Book of Idols*, trans. by Faris.
40 *The Qur'an*, trans. by Haleem, p. 212.
41 Ahmad, 'Ibn Taymiyyah and the Satanic Verses', pp. 72–73.

Humay falls in love with Humayun, the princess of China, after viewing a
picture of her in an enchanted palace in an ecstatic vision — recalling the
dream of Sheikh San'an.[42] Similarly, in the story of Shirin and Khosrau, as made
famous in the twelfth-century epic by Nizami, Shapour, the artist-companion
of Prince Khosrau of Persia, makes the Princess of Armenia, Shirin, fall in
love with the prince by hanging his portrait in the woods where she regularly
frolics with her ladies in waiting. While they initially try to protect her from
the powerful icon they assume was placed on the tree by evil spirits, Shapour
places the image three times before revealing the identity of the prince. On
viewing the image for the third time, she exclaims, 'I have fallen so in love
with this picture that one would take me for an idolater!' Shapour echoes the
Islamic mistrust of the image in his answer, also legitimating his own artistic
practice. 'Each picture created by an artist can only give a sign, for it remains
without life. I have only been taught the art of signs, but the clothing of the
soul can only be woven otherwise!'[43] In Persian, the word for 'sign' is the same
as that for 'target', and with these words Shirin sets off like an arrow riding her
trusty steed which no other horses can match, only to stop at a lake where
she bathes in the evening. Too impatient to wait at home, Khosrau has set out
northward to meet her. When he comes across the naked princess bathing,
he recognizes her beauty but looks away respectfully, thinking instead of his
intended Shirin. Likewise, she dresses, thinking only of her prince, whom
she does not recognize. Signals that divert attention rather than icons that
attract devotion, the pictures in these narratives suggest the mirror rather
than mimesis, thus recalling the parable of the painters.

Comparison of the narrative arcs caused by the transgressive gaze in the
story of Shirin and Khosrau with a similar event from the dominant version of
the Greek myth of Artemis and Actaeon elucidate this divergence. While on
the hunt, the mortal Actaeon accidentally comes across Artemis, goddess of
the hunt, bathing. Furious that he has profaned the mystery of her virginity, she
forbids him speech upon threat of turning him into a stag. When he protests,
his own dogs turn upon him. While the key moment — the revelation of the
divine to mortal eyes (in the one case, a metaphor for the divinity, in the other
a goddess) — is similar, the consequences diverge. In the Greek myth, having
been acknowledged, the transgressive act must be punished. The punishment
is silence or death — if the first taboo is the unbidden revelation of the divine,
then the second is its narration and thereby propagation to other unworthy
mortals. In the other tale, the mental image created by pictures serves to
protect both Shirin and Khosrau — each equally and reciprocally lover and
beloved — from recognizing the real lover before them. No transgression
takes place, and the punishment is replaced by a complicated quest. As much

42   Barry, *Figurative Art in Medieval Islam*, p. 129.
43   Weis, 'Das Bildnis im Bild', p. 176.

as representation of the beloved can function as a passage to revelation, it also functions as a veil.

As in the tales of Sheikh San'an and the Christian princess and Humay and Humayun, in *Leila and Mejnun*, the most famous rendition of which was written by Nizami in 1192, the boy Qays (whose name later changes to Mejnun, meaning the madness induced by his longing) falls in rapture when the wind blows the veil off the face of his radiant schoolmate, Leila. Like the curtain that divides the material world of the image from the infinitely more splendid world of the mirror, the veil before the beloved represents not a subjugation of the female so much as a boundary enabling only the initiated, appropriate lover to come into contact with the divine. Far from admonishing against sensual love, such poetry recognizes its force and harnesses its potential to point towards a disinterested beauty. Concluding that it is God's beauty that leads one to divine love, al-Ghazali acknowledges the value of physical love as part and parcel of the disinterested love of beauty, which he differentiated from sensual desire.

> Do not believe that love of beautiful forms is conceivable only for the satisfaction of sensual desire. The satisfaction of such a desire is another type of pleasure for which beautiful forms can also be loved. However, the perception of beauty also gives pleasure and can be loved for its own sake alone.[44]

Far from serving as a boundary, the veil itself becomes a mode of transmission of beauty in the aesthetic writings of the eleventh-century Andalusian thinker Ibn Hazm:

> Beauty is something that has in language no other name (than the one) that designates it, but is unanimously perceived by the souls when they see it. It is like a fine linen covering the face, a glance that inclines hearts towards it, in such a way that opinions coincide in judging it beautiful […] even though contemplating its separate qualities, one finds nothing remarkable […]. This is the highest of the categories of beauty.[45]

Like the idolized beloved which simultaneously signals transgression and transcendence, the veil thus can serve less as a barrier to perception than as its mediator.

This juxtaposition and transformation of the taboos against the image and viewing the beloved (outside of matrimony) into allegories of mystical transcendence that pervades the mystical tradition lies at the heart of the mythology surrounding Islamic monotheism itself, as narrated in the *Book of the Idols*. Al-Kalbi begins his story of the Arab renunciation of idols by relating how the monotheist descendants of Ishmael living in Mecca reverted

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44   Necipoğlu, *The Topkapı Scroll*, p. 192.
45   Gonzalez, *Beauty and Islam*, pp. 8–9.

to paganism when they began to worship the figures of Yemeni lovers who had been transformed into stone when, instead of performing the pilgrimage, they had committed adultery within the sanctuary of the Ka'aba.[46] Like Judas's betrayal of Jesus, the mythological cause of Islam lies in this foundational transgression, which causes the loss of Abrahamic monotheism that must be recovered through the revelation of the Qur'an. By connecting adultery and idolatry, the narrative suggests that it is not the image or the lover that structures the taboo, but its consummation through intercourse. The poetic tradition builds on this by suggesting this transgression as also transcendent, and that the image is as enabling as the destruction of the lovers was for the creation of Islam.

The function of the taboo image as *pharmakon*, wavering between absolute prohibition and absolute necessity, is perhaps nowhere more clearly articulated than in one of the frame stories in Rumi's *Mesnevi*, that of the Three Brothers and the Princess of China. Three princes set forth under the blessing of their father to discover the far corners of his (and thus their future) kingdom. The king promises them protection but warns them to keep away from the Fortress of Form, which is also a Robber of Consciousness. He warns, 'that castle has a gallery of beautiful pictures which causes great difficulty for the royal family. It's like the chamber Zuleikha decorated to trap Joseph, where her picture was everywhere'. Naturally, they head straight there. Inside, 'the thousands of pictures there made the princes restless'.[47]

Although partly metaphorical, such descriptions also represented real palaces where such poetry was commissioned and enjoyed. For example, an ode by the eleventh-century poet Unsuri about the palace of a Ghaznavid vizier describes within it a picture gallery, the brilliant cupola of which is like the cup of Kaykhusraw, where the 'twelve [houses of the zodiac] and the seven [planets] travel and rotate', a common means of depicting the dome of heaven within palace architecture. Unlike in the palace of Bahram Gur, however, the room is full of pictures, as in the Fortress of Form:

> Like idol-temples, its arches are filled with pictures
> Blooming like roses, flawless as the hearts of the pious.
> The brilliance of their moonlike faces ever shows forth roses; the curls
> of their black locks ever scatter pitch […].
> [The paintings] are not embroidered fabrics, yet all (wear) embroi-
> dered robes;
> [They are] not a gold mine, but all of the purest gold,
> Not a silver mine, but all of silver-work […].
> Therein is limned — with auspicious portent and felicitous star —
> The lord, feasting and fighting, upon the throne, and in the hunt.

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46   Hisham Ibn-al-Kalbi, *The Book of Idols*, trans. by Faris, pp. 24–25.
47   *The Essential Rumi*, trans. by Barks, pp. 233–37.

> Hunting for lofty fortune; fighting the rage of foes;
> Demonstrating everlasting affluence at the feast.[48]

Although not specified as portraits, the description of moonlike faces wearing gold- and silver-embroidered garments suggests a picture gallery in which images of women surround that of a king. However, on an allegorical level, the room also suggests a passage from the realm of materiality and beauty towards one of transcendence. For though the arches of the room are filled with pictures like temples dedicated to idols, these pictures are also like the hearts of the pious whose faces radiate like the moon and whose hair radiates darkness. This notion of radiating black light is a common poetic trope for divine light, the brightness of which darkens human eyes.[49] Thus even a celebration of physical wealth is intertwined with a recollection of its metaphysical qualities.

The transformation of such a gallery into a fortress of form in Rumi's poem suggests that the pictures represent not only their manifest content, but also immateriality. As such, the danger of the fortress as robbing consciousness recalls the Qur'anic reminder that 'the love of desirable things is made alluring for men […] and these may be the joys of this life, but God has the best place to return to' (Q 3. 14).[50] Indeed the metaphors used for the loss of consciousness of the princes as they wander through — drunkenness and lust — suggest the familiar temptations of young men away from piety. Drunkenly, they wander through the palace, finally coming before the portrait of a woman with whom they all fall in love. They are told that, 'she is the Chinese princess, the hidden one. The Chinese king has concealed her as the spirit is wrapped in an embryo. No one may come into her presence. Birds are not even allowed to fly over her roof. No one can figure a way in'. The princess represents materiality both as temptation, the worship of an image, and as embodiment: the spirit wrapped as potential within a human form.

As they renounce their kingdom and set off for China, the response of each brother to her stimulus serves as a parable. The eldest petitions the king of China, who 'was inside the three brothers, but pretended to be unfamiliar with them', representing the Godhead within the heart of each individual that is also conceived as an external power. Likewise, the three brothers can also be understood as representing the three levels of consciousness through which the seeker of God progresses on the path to true understanding. Realizing that 'this is reality, this waking, this melting away […] the form of the beloved left his mind and he found union. The clothes of the body were sweet silk, but this nakedness is sweeter', the eldest brother dies of desire, a mystical salvation that lies at one extreme of the response to theophany. In direct contrast, consumed by pride in his ability to perceive, the second brother

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48 Meisami, 'Palaces and Paradises', p. 27.
49 Şeyh Galip, *Beauty and Love*, trans. by Holbrook, p. xix.
50 *The Qur'an*, trans. by Haleem, p. 35.

is banished and repents. The king saves him by killing him with an arrow, becoming both his slayer and his chief mourner. Finally, the third brother receives the hand of the princess because 'he lived in the marriage of form and spirit, and did absolutely nothing to deserve it'. The poem thus suggests a golden mean that constitutes neither the consummation of ecstasy nor the adultery of vanity, but a neutrality before the image that both recognizes and allows it to remain hidden.

In the highly intertextual eighteenth-century romance *Beauty and Love*, the Ottoman poet Şeyh Galip (leader of the dervish lodge devoted to the teachings of Jelal ad-Din Rumi) further explicates these tropes in developing the Fortress of Form and the Chinese Princess. He likens the fortress to a Hindu temple, the stones that pre-Islamic Arab tribes used to worship the goddess Lat, and a church nave thus affiliating the image with the idol and the icon against which Islamic culture built its taboos against representational art. He then likens it to the palace built by Zuleikha, and the carved images of Shirin that dazzle her second beloved in her story, Farhad, and paintings by the famed artists Mani and Behzad, thus indicating the affiliation between the worship of the believer and the icon/idol, the rapture of the lover for his beloved, and the illustration of these as images within Islamic culture. Nonetheless,

> The forms there from matter were disengaged
> Presenting themselves uniquely half faced.

Thus while material, they were also and simultaneously immaterial. In contrast to Rumi's tale, where the artist of the princess's portrait is ambiguous, in Şeyh Galip's rendition, she is the artist.

> The one who had painted all those portraits
> Was none but that jeering Chinese princess.

> Fantastic like lovers' most cherished dreams
> A trick never in this world to be seen.[51]

Although as creator of all the decoration in the palace, the princess could be a metaphor for the divine Creator, at the same time she is 'jeering', a simulacrum of the Beauty which Love, trapped in the Fortress of Forms, seeks. He burns down the fortress, ignoring the magical treasure left in its ashes, within which lay the representation of the entire world. Wasting away with despair, he is saved by Poetry, who leads him to the Land of the Heart, which he had never really left. However, his journey has purified his soul, enabling him to discover that he is already one with Beauty: the theophany is his consciousness that their union always already lies within. Again as in the paradox of Satan, here form is a necessary passage to 'the land of non-existent things' where only Dazzle can lead him past the 'curtains of union' with the divine.[52]

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51   Şeyh Galip, *Beauty and Love*, trans. by Holbrook, p. 179.
52   Şeyh Galip, *Beauty and Love*, trans. by Holbrook, p. 185.

Throughout all the parables of love, the beloved and his or her image alike serve as signs not of the human, but towards the veiled union with the divine. Their unveiling consists in moving beyond the glancing sight offered through the images towards the contemplative, inward vision of the beloved within the lover. There is no difference between viewing the beloved in person or in a picture, as a sign: just as any form of nature created by God is an *ayah*, the word that means both a sign of the divine and a Qur'anic verse, so is its image.[53] Thus we can view the world as a series of nested signs with divine truth at its core; everything else is nothing but form.

Like the veil, the picture itself simultaneously shields and reveals. It appears to satisfy vision, but proves deceptive for those who do not know how to view beyond the form towards (and not at) the concept it embodies. When seen as imaginal rather than as image, Islamic pattern and figural representation emerge as separate only in form, not function. In contrast to the post-Renaissance Western tradition, in which the picture serves as a window onto the world in which realistically depicted objects and figures can also serve a symbolic function, Islamic representation and abstraction alike serve as a curtain across reality which can only be lifted, and thus sanctified, through the contemplative space beyond form. Only when viewed through the glancing gaze that views it as a window does the picture becomes transgressive, harbouring idolatry and adultery as equal taboos through which the tension between the divine and the created is replayed, veil upon veil.

From the Veil as Image to the Image of the Veil

The veil, however, is never solely metaphorical as in the discursive realm of classical Islam: in the tales above, the lifting of the veil or viewing the beloved signals the moment of transgression that results in the lover's madness that parallels the taboo of viewing women commonly associated with Islam as a lived practice. What can this poetic veil reveal about the physical veil that is perennially reproduced as a key signifier of Islam?

Contemporary political discourse in both the Middle East and in the West recognizes the veiled woman as a primary symbol of Islam, often considering it a key element of faith. However, just as there are no scriptural sanctions on images in Islam, there are also no commandments for women to veil. Rather, the Qur'an enjoins both women and men to lower their gaze (presumably in order to not trespass the privacy of the other sex) and guard their private parts. In addition, it allows for cultural flexibility by bidding women not to 'display their charms beyond what [it is acceptable] to reveal'.[54] However, the *awra* (the forbidden zone of the body) has been interpreted and fixed through

53 Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman*, p. 18.
54 *The Qur'an*, trans. by Haleem, pp. 222–23.

various schools of Islamic law that mandate various forms of veiling.[55] As interpretations relying as much on cultural practice as on foundational texts, these can be regarded as legislative sanction of cultural taboos.

This becomes evident from the dominant interpretations of the so-called *hijab* verse,

> O believers, do not enter the Prophet's apartments for a meal unless you are given permission to do so […]. When you ask his wives for something, do so from behind a screen (*hijab*): this is purer both for your hearts and for theirs. (Q 33. 53)[56]

The word *hijab*, used within the Qur'an to designate a device that creates separation or privacy, also carries various metaphorical meanings such as separating truth from falsehood, light from dark, or a literal screen designating the space of the Prophet praying, of his wives beside him, or of the virgin Mary about to receive the Annunciation. However, the word has 'evolved in meaning and is most commonly used to denote the idea of a Muslim woman's veil […] and more generally to denote a level of segregation between the sexes'.[57] In contemporary Islamic culture, it has also come to designate a politically self-conscious practice of veiling that reasserts Islam in the face of Westernizing modernization. As such, the veil needs to be understood not simply as a religious practice, but as a defining signifier within the counter-hegemonic force of twentieth-century political Islam.[58]

The veil, then, has become an ambivalent sign for Muslim women. On the one hand, Islamic feminists assert their right to worship and dress as individuals. On the other, supporters of secular modernity associate veiling with the broader practices of patriarchy that pervade Islamic cultures, and which can be associated with the dominance of authoritarian political structures within them.[59] This leaves liberal supporters of individual autonomy in a double bind: How can one 'liberate' the Muslim woman from the subjugation that she herself chooses without resorting to an authoritarianism equal to that attributed to Islam? This question has played out in numerous legislative debates throughout much of the secular Islamic world and Europe.[60] What all of these practices share is the production of the veil as a sign for the status of its substrate, woman. The agency of woman as she participates and forms both the public and private sphere becomes veiled under the symbolism of the sign that represents her. If the signification of the veil thus replaces the

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55 Hsu, 'Modesty'.

56 *The Qur'an*, trans. by Haleem, p. 270.

57 Berger, 'The Newly Veiled Woman', p. 104; Siddiqui, 'Veil', p. 412.

58 Butko, 'Revelation or Revolution'.

59 Fish, 'Islam and Authoritarianism', pp. 29–37.

60 Aldikaçti Marshall, 'Ideology, Progress, and Dialogue'; Killian, 'The Other Side of the Veil'; Cooke, 'Women, Religion, and the Postcolonial Arab World'; Fernando, 'The Republic's "Second Religion"'; Arat, 'The Project of Modernity and Women in Turkey'.

actual agency of women as a means of understanding social gender practices, then the only means of revealing this agency is to deconstruct the signification of the veil that hides it.

Slavoj Zizek attempts this in his analysis of the veil as symbolic of the 'traumatic presence' of the feminine that constitutes Islam's 'repressed foundation'. Summarizing the problem of the veil through Lacan's consideration of the anecdote of Zeuxis and Parhasius, he explains that women's adornment makes man react like Zeuxis in front of Parhasius's painting, demanding the unveiling of truth in order to alleviate the castration anxiety engendered by the veil. The fact that she cannot do so enhances rather than reduces her power: the absence of the penis makes her the phallus, the object of desire. Zizek suggests that the veil does not function to hide the feminine body, but rather functions on a more symbolic register to conceal the absence of absolute Truth. 'Therein resides the concealed scandal of Islam', he declares, 'only a woman, the very embodiment of the indiscernibility of truth and lie, can guarantee Truth. For this reason, she has to remain veiled'. Ironically, however, it is this very absence, rather than the phallic presence, which in the Islamic tradition would represent the divine.[61]

Replacing the story of Zeuxis and Parhasius with that of the Chinese and Greek painters, the veil, like that of the beloved, hides a splendour beyond that of the original painting. This is not the frightening truth of 'lies and deception' posited by Zizek, but instead a truth of infinite, mirrored unveiling: a specularity that simultaneously depends on and exceeds representation. It is not woman who is a threat, but revelation itself which, like an icon exposed to the glancing gaze, invites the taboo of idolatry. The problem is with a sexuality not mistrusted as a deceptive hall of mirrors of the hidden fake penis revealed to be hiding the spectre of the unattainable real phallus, but entrusted as an image infinitely echoing in the mirror of the divine. The iconic image of the veiled woman, folded into the immanent promise of her revelation, and the proscription of the image, perennially re-enacted through its interdiction, emerge not as coincidental icons of contemporary perceptions of Islam, but as twin systems of proscription that stitch the restless boundary between the visible and the real, male and female, created and creator, man and the divine.

The difference between Parhasius's veil and the Islamic one is that while the one is fictional, the other is real. If this founding 'veil' of Western representation relies on the inherent and unceasing temptation of deception, then its Islamic corruption is rooted no less in the equally inherent *pharmakon* of revelation: the promise of the divine, always within reach and equally unattainable. In contrast to the Freudian-Lacanian model of the phallus, where the locus of imaginary power is predicated on the visibility of the penis, which allows it to be seen, hidden, fetishized, and specularized, in the parable of the artists, the condition of presence is not visibility but the void of the mirror, reflecting not

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61   Zizek, 'A Glance into the Archives of Islam'.

absence but enhanced presence. By replacing the false curtain with the mirror, the parable of the artists shifts the visual economy from one that depends on hidden presence (the fetishized phallus) to one that depends on the infinite deferral of mirrored space. Instead of two phallic zones of representation that result in a competition for power, as in the paintings of Zeuxis and Parhasius, the parable of the artists creates a void that is actually a greater presence than presence itself. Representation becomes merely a sign towards the mirror, an infinite paradox that holds the space of divine apperception. Under such circumstances, the space of the veil is not the space of anxiety and potential castration, the space that must unveil in order to reveal its impotence, but a space reserved for the contemplative gaze.

Translated into contemporary politics, we might consider that the veil appears to represent woman, but instead uses the veiled female body as a sign for the space reserved for the sacred: the very possibility for religion to persist in a secular world. As Franz Fanon points out, the veil within a colonial order represents the impotence of a dominant society to inculcate its values on the colonized, thus making veiling either a sign of submission or a mode of subterfuge.[62] Such a colonial order need not be direct, as in Algeria, but any social order defined by modernist, secularist values in which the veil has come to represent a sign of adherence to an oppositional Islamist ideology, as in Turkey or France. Within this framework, women choose to wear the veil (and often justify patriarchal or economic coercion they may experience to wear the veil) for a wide variety of reasons that often valorize it with tropes of exceptional goodness and power. Replacing traditional regional modes of veiling with a more pan-Islamist veiling system, for many Muslim women the *hijab* represents a sign of their purity and power, opposed to the 'civilized' woman who, in her adornment, blinds the masculine gaze and bars him from the vision of God. As Anne-Emmanuelle Berger explains, 'The opposite of the veiled woman would then not be so much the naked woman as the adorned woman; which means that it is the veil which, in a reversal of the traditional logic of the supplement, lays the woman bare, by rendering adornment invisible. The denuded woman, the one whom God sees through and who allows men to see God, is the veiled woman'.[63] In hiding, the woman gains visibility and must move from self-consciousness to self-mastery. 'The *hijab*, then, is itself pictured as a prosthetic eye whose gaze cannot be escaped, while it sends back to women an image of their selves, which they strive to appropriate'.[64] Rather than a form of shrinking away or modesty, the veil becomes a gesture of challenge and display. Like the mirror in the parable of the artists, it depends on the gaze of man, and yet it simultaneously turns that gaze back onto him.

62   Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism*, pp. 35–64.
63   Berger, 'The Newly Veiled Woman', p. 107.
64   Berger, 'The Newly Veiled Woman', p. 109.

Within the specular order of Zeuxis and Parhasius underlying the Western notion of representation, the veil constitutes a puzzle because it hides truth. In obstructing the gaze, it refuses the power of the state and its will-to-knowledge. The woman should not be veiled because from it, she sees without being seen as an individual. She thereby becomes a panoptic sign that challenges the contract with the state that differentiates liberalism from anarchy. While the veiled woman is perceived as subjugated, the veiled woman as a sign constitutes a threat because she is also the taboo of liberal ideology. Conversely, while the veiled woman in Islamic tradition often represents no less than theophany, in real life her veiling is often part of her subjugation. Yet neither the construction of woman as a political or a divine sign alters her status within patriarchal social structures. Veiled or unveiled, she is stuck as a sign.

Ironically, however, not only is the agency of women erased through the prohibition of the veil, but also, paradoxically, the foundation of liberal humanism upon which the egalitarian relativity of cultures within the modern Western nation-state depends.[65] Zizek points out that the French state's prohibition of the veil limits the individual's deconstruction of her presence as an individual within public space and thus paradoxically limits her autonomy, the very thing the prohibition seeks to protect. Such a prohibition of prohibitions eliminates the exterior space of actual difference: 'Therein resides the paradox of the tolerant multiculturalist universe of the multitude of life-styles and other identities: the more it is tolerant, the more it is oppressively homogeneous'.[66] The danger represented by the veil, particularly for Western societies, but also for those societies that have adopted the principles of liberal humanism as part of modernization through Westernization, is less the expressed threat of radical Islam, or the pity expressed for the (supposedly) poor subjugated Islamic woman, but the possibility that the presence of alterity might actually undermine the fiction of freedom upon which tolerance depends. In effect, liberal humanism, once associated with the transparent verisimilitude of Zeuxis's representation of bounty, is revealed as actually functioning as a trompe l'oeil no different from Parhasius's curtain that cannot be pulled back. More than a real source of power, liberal humanism becomes no more than the phallic core of modern liberal discourse which gains its power only as long as the veil remains in place.

The specular order of the parable of the artists unravels this impasse. This veil represents a very different kind of alterity: neither a magnification of castration anxiety, nor an always deferred promise of representation, but a mirror image, always already identical and at the same time always already unattainable. As such, it shows both the self and the other within the same image, irrevocably bound within the same contemplative space. Rather than

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65   Jussawalla, 'Are Cultural Rights Bad for Multicultural Societies'.
66   Zizek, 'A Glance into the Archives of Islam'.

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constituting the veiled woman as a sign of Islamic repression and the unveiled woman as her opposite, a sign of Western liberalism, the opposition between the two itself merges within a single mirror image as a sign for a modern order rooted in phallic singularity that must construct its opposite in order to have something to dominate. This is the space in which we live.

The question, then, is how to learn to apprehend the real: the work of the actual painters on the wall that human agency itself creates. In this reality, we may have to live with the contradiction that presence *or* absence of veiling may indicate liberation as much as suppression, since the problem in both cases is not with the agency of women, but with their reduction to the function of signs in public space. The discussion of the 'veiled Muslim woman' as a sign in modern European rhetoric signals the taboo over discussing the persistence of patriarchal norms in supposedly gender-egalitarian Europe. Deferred into the mirror of the other, the reality of European gender discrimination remains fixed and unseen against the straw(wo)man of suffering others apparently waiting for white saviours.

Likewise, in light of a plethora of images in Islamic cultures, the often-repeated trope of the universal 'Islamic image prohibition' functions as a means of legitimating Islamophobia informed by Christian legacies within a liberal secularist rubric. It recycles the nineteenth-century universalization and demonization of the supposed Jewish 'Bilderverbot' as a marker of failed assimilation to iconophilic European norms implicitly based in Christian traditions.[67] While today's far right expresses no compunction in expressing overt Islamophobia through rhetoric referencing the Crusades, more liberal voices turn to the supposed taboos of the image and the female form as markers of essential difference that both occlude and frame Christianity as the common ground of European identity. In this context, both the image and the veil shift from being modes of visuality to being supersaturated signs of identity that crystalize modern political antagonisms. This image of the Muslim, like the image of the Jew a century ago, becomes a fortress of form that robs our consciousness of the dangers intrinsic to demonizing the diverse cultural practices of others. Instead of becoming trapped in this fortress, we might listen to how it articulates its own logic, growing stronger together in the multiple possibilities through which to view and reflect upon our world.

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67 Bland, *The Artless Jew.*

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JENS RÜFFER

De spiritu et anima

The Cistercians, the Image, and Imagination

In 1098 a group of monks, together with their abbot, Robert, left their home monastery Molesme in Burgundy to establish a new monastery (*novum monasterium*) at a place that was later called Cîteaux.[1] The community wished to reform the Benedictine life. Going back to their roots, the apostolic life and the Rule of St Benedict, they tried to re-establish a monastic life in poverty and chastity according to their rule's precepts.[2] As far as the individual soul was concerned, the main goal in their reform was to cut off monks' connections to the world as much as possible, and to give monastic daily routine a new balance between praying, working, and resting. The monk was to be free to devote himself to God, and there should be nothing to distract him.

The years leading up to around 1111, when the young Bernard of Fontaines, later Abbot of Clairvaux,[3] entered the New Monastery at Cîteaux, were made very difficult by a lack of economic support. But the steadily growing community recovered very quickly, making necessary the establishment of the first daughter houses: La Ferté in 1113, Pontigny in 1114, and finally Morimond and Clairvaux in 1115. The growth of these daughter houses reflected the development of the concept of a new monastic order. The main institution was the General Chapter, an assembly of the abbots, which convened once a year at Cîteaux in September and was charged with making the necessary decisions to assure the uniformity (*uniformitas*) and unanimity (*unanimitas*) of the order.[4] In everything, all were to observe 'the same manner of life

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1 For the history, the history of architecture, spirituality, and anthropology of the medieval Cistercians, see Birkedal Bruun, *The Companion to the Cistercian Order*; Kinder, *Cistercian Europe*; Melville, *Die Welt der mittelalterlichen Klöster*, pp. 123–41; Eberl, *Die Zisterzienser*; Rüffer, *Die Zisterzienser und ihre Klöster*; Untermann, *Forma Ordinis*; Kasper and Schreiner, *Zisterziensische Spiritualität*; *Three Treatises on Man*, ed. by McGinn, pp. 1–100.
2 Altermatt, 'Die erste Liturgiereform in Cîteaux'.
3 Dinzelbacher, *Bernhard von Clairvaux*.
4 Cygler, *Das Generalkapitel im hohen Mittelalter*, pp. 23–118.

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and customs'.[5] Lacking a charismatic founder — Robert of Molesme had been obliged to leave the young community after one year and return to the monastery of Molesme — the great innovation of the White monks consisted of a new form of monastic corporate organization, in which the mother house of Cîteaux was only primus inter pares.[6]

Whereas the concept of unanimity referred to the spiritual unity of all Cistercian monks who should become, like the apostles, one heart and one soul although living in different places, the concept of uniformity referred to the outer appearance of the order, beginning with the monastic habit up to the equipment of liturgy, monastic buildings, and the design of monastic architecture in general.[7]

Given that, aside from painted wooden crosses,[8] the early Cistercians never permitted images such as sculptures or illuminated manuscripts with images or narrative scenes,[9] nor did they allow stained-glass windows or precious material for liturgy,[10] why should they be chosen as a subject for speaking about the visual? I argue that they did, in fact, contribute to the field of the visual with an influential negative aesthetics.[11]

The majority of scholarly discussions of Cistercian art and architecture focuses on the early twelfth-century monastic controversy between Cistercians and Cluniacs, in particular on those passages of the treatises dealing with the appearance of monastic churches: architecture (ground plan, elevation, liturgical spaces), sculpture, pavements, wall decoration, stained-glass windows as well as liturgical furnishings, vestments, and utensils.[12] In this contribution, however, I adopt an anthropological perspective to describe the monks' mentality.

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5 *Capitulum* IX, in *Narrative and Legislative Texts from Early Cîteaux*, ed. by Waddell, p. 409; *Instituta generalis capituli* II, in *Narrative and Legislative Texts from Early Cîteaux*, ed. by Waddell, p. 458.

6 Melville, *Die Welt der mittelalterlichen Klöster*, pp. 132–36.

7 Rüffer, *Die Zisterzienser und ihre Klöster*, pp. 17–23.

8 *Capitulum* XXVI, in *Narrative and Legislative Texts from Early Cîteaux*, ed. by Waddell, p. 413; *Instituta generalis capituli* XX, in *Narrative and Legislative Texts from Early Cîteaux*, ed. by Waddell, p. 464.

9 *Instituta generalis capituli* XIII and LXXXII, in *Narrative and Legislative Texts from Early Cîteaux*, ed. by Waddell, pp. 462 and 491.

10 *Instituta generalis capituli* LXXXII, in *Narrative and Legislative Texts from Early Cîteaux*, ed. by Waddell, p. 491. *Capitulum* XXV, in *Narrative and Legislative Texts from Early Cîteaux*, ed. by Waddell, p. 413; *Instituta generalis capituli* X, in *Narrative and Legislative Texts from Early Cîteaux*, ed. by Waddell, p. 460.

11 The term *aesthetics* is used here in a broad sense and not limited to art and architecture. Applied to the Middle Ages, it appears anachronistic because it was never used by any medieval author. The German philosopher Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714–1762) was the first who integrated aesthetics into a philosophical system. His approach was a broad one, and his use of the term not yet restricted to a history of the beautiful and the arts. Baumgarten, *Ästhetik*, trans. by Mirbach.

12 Rudolph, 'The Things of Greater Importance'; Untermann, *Forma Ordinis*, pp. 95–118; Frese, *Die Bildkritik des Bernhard von Clairvaux*; Rüffer, *Die Zisterzienser und ihre Klöster*, pp. 17–23.

There are two reasons for choosing such an approach. First, in the Middle Ages the term 'ars' meant something completely different than our term 'art'. No theory of the arts or of architecture existed. The methodological framework we use as art historians to describe and analyse medieval works of 'art' and architecture does not correspond to the social contexts, the world views, or the mindsets of people in the Middle Ages.[13] Second, all normative notions within monastic reforms relating to the phenomenon we consider 'art' today were the *result* of a particular (spiritual) attitude and not the primary aim of the debate. The question for the Cistercians as part of a larger monastic reform movement was: What is the appropriate outer expression of a particular inner attitude?[14]

This contribution is limited to the twelfth century, and with respect to material culture to architecture. Before approaching this topic, a few introductory remarks are in order. One should always keep in mind that the liturgical furnishings were less austere than we might assume today. The example of the monastic church of Doberan (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, fourteenth century) may serve as a good example.[15] The architectural remains, apart from medieval remodelling, are very often fragmentary, reconstructed or rebuilt according to the fashion of the time. Furthermore, in the long term the Cistercians acted very dynamically and adapted their art and architecture in keeping with contemporary standards, especially those of other religious orders. Thus, it makes no sense to compare fourteenth-century Cistercian complexes with normative sources from the first half of the twenty-first century. Finally, by the late twelfth century Cistercian monasteries were almost all over Europe, from Ireland or Scandinavia to the Mediterranean area, from Portugal up to the Baltic region. The order spread over different realms and cultural regions. The order's unity was therefore primarily represented by *unanimitas* — by being one heart and one soul (*cor et anima una*, Acts 4. 32) like the apostles — and less by the *uniformitas* of architecture and furnishings.

Regarding the central point of this essay mentioned above, my hypothesis is that the Cistercians' spiritual ascent to God, which was accompanied by purifying sensual perception, was facilitated by purifying the world of images. This was one way to avoid distraction, to avoid the vice of curiosity, and to strengthen meditation and contemplation. The first part of this contribution outlines that which one could call the Cistercian mentality. The final part relates Cistercian spirituality to the monuments.

Cistercian authors focused on spiritual ideas. Guillaume de Saint-Thierry (✝ 1148), Aelred of Rievaulx (✝ 1167), Isaac of Stella (✝ 1174), John of Ford (✝ 1214), Adam of Perseigne (✝ 1221), and above all Bernard of Clairvaux (✝ 1153) are the most influential writers of twelfth- and early thirteenth-century Cistercian spirituality.[16] Bernard McGinn has shown that 'the attitude of the

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13   Rüffer, 'Artes mechanicae, creatio, ingenium and phantasia'.
14   Rüffer, *Orbis Cisterciensis*, pp. 11–41.
15   Weilandt and von Cossart, *Die Ausstattung des Doberaner Münsters*.
16   Pennington, 'Die Zisterzienser'.

Cistercians to the theological variety of the twelfth century was both more nuanced and more positive than simple conclusions drawn from Bernard's attacks on Abelard and Gilbert of Poitiers indicate'.[17] The Cistercian contribution to monastic spirituality can be seen in the concept of what McGinn called 'theological anthropology' understood as 'the meaning of the human situation in the light of revelation'.[18] But this anthropology was only an instrument to order the monk's life. Knowing oneself for Cistercian thinkers meant to be aware of the fact that man had been made in the image of God, in other words in his likeness, but had fallen into the state of unlikeness. Self-knowledge could not be achieved by intellectual efforts, but was rather a moral or ascetic approach focusing on the practical aspects of the monk's daily life. The main questions behind it were how the individual soul could achieve the ascent to God, and what might constitute the mystical union itself. The Cistercian attitude towards the visual has to be placed in this broader context. 'The goal of the Cistercian reform', as McGinn summed up, 'was to produce the kind of monastic milieu which would foster direct contact with God as its most important goal'.[19]

To the group of Cistercian treatises 'On the Soul' (*De anima*), amongst others written by Aelred of Rievaulx,[20] Guillaume de Saint-Thierry,[21] or Isaac of Stella,[22] belongs the famous anonymous treatise *De spiritu et anima*.[23] The text — mostly attributed to Alcher of Clairvaux, but not written by him — was composed shortly after 1170 and was widely read in monastic circles.[24] The treatise, which consists mainly of paraphrases and quotations from earlier authors, is almost completely lacking in originality. Its popularity might be understood from the perspective that, as McGinn puts it, 'anyone could find in it whatever pleased him in the matter of a definition of the soul or a classification of its powers, as long as he chose to neglect the different and sometimes opposed definitions and classifications also present in the work'.[25] Thus, as the following description of the content will demonstrate, the main ideas are neither sophisticated nor without contradictions, and it would go beyond the scope of this paper to discuss its notions within a broader intellectual context.

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17 *Three Treatises on Man*, ed. by McGinn, p. 75.
18 *Three Treatises on Man*, ed. by McGinn, p. 76.
19 *Three Treatises on Man*, ed. by McGinn, p. 91.
20 Aelred of Rievaulx, *De anima*, ed. by Hoste and Talbot; Aelred of Rievaulx, *Dialogue on the Soul*, trans. by Talbot.
21 Guillaume de Saint-Thierry, *De natura corporis et animae*, ed. by Migne; Guillaume de Saint-Thierry, *The Nature of the Body and the Soul*, trans. by Clark.
22 Isaac of Stella, *Epistola De anima*, ed. by Migne, cols 1875–90; Isaac of Stella, *The Letter on the Soul*, trans. by McGinn.
23 *De spiritu et anima*, ed. by Migne, cols 779–832; *Treatise on the Spirit and the Soul*, trans. by Leiva and Ward.
24 For date and authorship, see *Three Treatises on Man*, ed. by McGinn, pp. 65–67.
25 *Three Treatises on Man*, ed. by McGinn, p. 67.
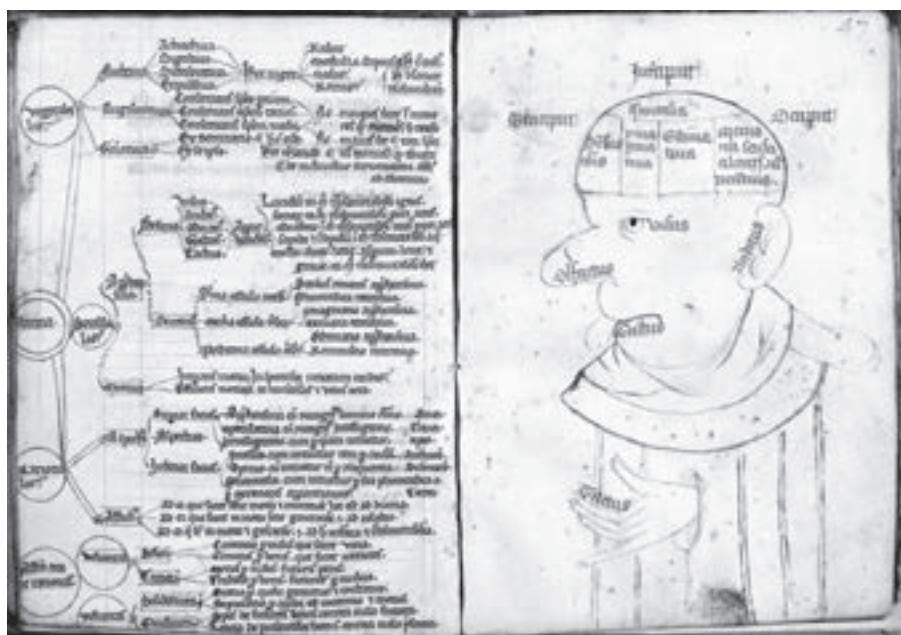
FIGURE 4.1. 'Diagrammatic scheme and monk's head in a manuscript of *De spiritu et anima*', Cambridge, Trinity College Library, MS O.7.16, fols 46ᵛ and 47ʳ. Courtesy of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College Cambridge.

In a thirteenth-century manuscript of *De spiritu et anima*, now in the library of Trinity College at Cambridge, the process of perception is illustrated by a diagrammatic scheme and an image showing a monk's head (Figure 4.1).[26] According to the scheme there is a distinction between the five inner senses and the five outer senses. As stated by the medieval writer, the external senses as touch, smell, taste, hearing, and sight are regarded as carnal or corporeal, while the inner senses *sensus communis*, *phantasia*, *vis imaginativa*, *vis estimativa*, and *memoria* are non-corporeal, and are also called faculties or powers of the soul. The exterior senses are purely functional; their task consists of collecting information from the exterior world. Bodily things are perceived as they are found in matter, and sense knowledge connects the soul with the outer world. The inner senses, on the other hand, process the information given by the exterior senses and interpret them.[27] This leads finally to the contemplation of divine things. The author of *De spiritu et anima* wrote: 'Now the brain has three lobes. […] In the first or anterior part of the

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26 For the broader context of the process of sense perception, see Rüffer, *Werkprozess – Wahrnehmung – Interpretation*, pp. 231–61.

27 Wolfson, 'The Internal Senses in Latin, Arabic, and Hebrew Philosophic Texts'; Camille, 'Before the Gaze'.

brain the animal power is called phantasmal or imaginary, because in this part are contained the likenesses and images of corporeal things, and hence it is spoken of as the imaginative faculty. In the medial part of the brain the power is termed rational, since there it probes and makes judgments upon the things that are represented through the imagination. In the third or posterior part of the brain the animal power is termed memorial, because there it entrusts to memory whatever reason has judged'.[28] In the same treatise the process of sensual perception is described as follows: 'The soul (*anima*) perceives bodies (*corporea*) with sense knowledge (*sensus*), the likenesses of bodies (*corporum similitudines*) with the imagination (*imaginatio*), the natures of bodies (*corporum naturas*) with reason (*ratio*), created spirits (*spiritum creatum*) with discernment (*intellectus*) and the uncreated spirit (*spiritum increatum*) with understanding (*intelligentia*). Whatever is perceived by sense knowledge (*sensus*) is represented by the imagination (*imaginatio*), formed by thought (*cogitatio*), probed by the soul's forethought (*ingenium*), judged by insight (*ratio*), preserved by the memory (*memoria*), defined by discernment (*intellectus*), and, finally, comprehended by understanding (*intelligentia*) and led to meditation (*meditatio*) and contemplation (*contemplatio*)'.[29] The process of sensual perception is a process of abstraction and purification.

The whole model of sense knowledge as laid out in theological debates focuses on sight. Sight is the most valuable sense, since that sense is the least material.[30] Furthermore, sight plays an important role in that all the things perceived by the outer senses can only be thought of as mental images. An image is regarded as 'a perfect replica of that of which it is a reflection, then it must necessarily be equal to its source'.[31] Imagination arises from sense perception. 'The imagination is that power of the soul which perceives the corporeal form of bodily things, but as absent […]; the imagination perceives them as found outside matter'.[32] The author of *De spiritu et anima* stated elsewhere:

28 'Tres namque sunt ventriculi cerebri. […] In prima parte cerebri vis animalis vocatur phantastica, id est imaginaria; quia in ea corporalium rerum similitudines et imagines continentur, unde et phantasticum dicitur. In media parte cerebri vocatur rationalis; quia ibi examinat et judicat ea quae per imaginationem repraesentantur. In ultima parte vocatur memorialis; quia ibi commendat memoriae quae a ratione sunt judicata'. *De spiritu et anima* XXII, ed. by Migne, col. 795; *Treatise on the Spirit and the Soul*, trans. by Leiva and Ward, p. 214.
29 'Sic igitur anima sensu percipit corpora, imaginatione corporum similitudines, ratione corporum naturas, intellectu spiritum creatum, intelligentia spiritum increatum. Et quidquid sensus percipit, imaginatio repraesentat, cogitatio format, ingenium investigat, ratio judicat, memoria servat, intellectus separat, intelligentia comprehendit, et ad meditationem sive contemplationem adducit'. *De spiritu et anima* XI, ed. by Migne, col. 787; *Treatise on the Spirit and the Soul*, trans. by Leiva and Ward, p. 196.
30 See Rüffer, *Orbis Cisterciensis*, p. 232; Rüffer, *Werkprozess – Wahrnehmung – Interpretation*, pp. 231–61; Guillaume de Saint-Thierry, *De natura corporis et animae*, ed. by Migne, col. 704C.
31 'Imago enim si perfecte implet illud cujus est imago, coaequalis est illi'. *De spiritu et anima* VI, ed. by Migne, col. 783; *Treatise on the Spirit and the Soul*, trans. by Leiva and Ward, p. 188.
32 'Imaginatio est ea vis animae, quae rerum corporearum corporeas percipit formas, sed

The imagination moves from the anterior to the medial part of the head, thereby touching the very substance of the rational soul and occasioning the capacity for distinguishing. […]; in rational animals the imagination is made purer until it is brought into contact with the rational and incorporeal substance of the soul. Seen thus, the imagination is a likeness of the body. It is formed externally when through the corporeal senses the fiery power contacts corporeal things. After being formed, the imagination is led back through those same senses to the purer part of the corporeal spirit and it is imprinted upon it. At its highest part the imagination is a corporeal spirit, and at its lowest something rational which informs bodily nature and is in contact with rational nature.[33]

Within that spiritual or theological context, it has to be emphasized, the sense of sight (*visus*) is not described, analysed, or discussed with respect to physical or optical phenomena (e.g. intromission/extramission theory).

Sight was, at least in the monastic environment, ambivalent, both spiritually and physically. Spiritually speaking, interior sight made the understanding of divine things possible, but at the same time exterior sight could distract the monk's attention from important things. Sight was essential for visions, but that which had been experienced could become a matter of debate.[34] Finally, seeing was also metaphorically used in the sense of understanding. Physically speaking the exterior senses could deceive. This is an old philosophic motif since Aristotle. He gave the famous example of a stick standing in water. The stick appears to be broken, but it is not. Dealing with sensual perception, in particular with sight (*visus*), medieval authors described different visual phenomena, but they did not use examples from the sphere of the arts, where objects were visually manipulated, but examples from nature.[35] The anonymous author of the *De spiritu et anima* wrote: 'Those at sea, for instance, may see objects on the land as moving, whereas actually they are still. Likewise those who gaze at the stars may think that stars are stationary, whereas in fact they are moving. When the beams of the eyes are refracted, one single object can appear to have two

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absentes. […] imaginatio extra materia [percipit].' *De spiritu et anima* XI, ed. by Migne, col. 786; *Treatise on the Spirit and the Soul*, trans. by Leiva and Ward, p. 195.

33 'Postea eadem imaginatio ab anteriori parte capitis ad medium transiens, ipsam animae rationalis substantiam contingit, et excitat discretionem: […] [imaginatio] in rationalibus [animalibus] autem purior fit, et usque ad rationalem et incorpoream animae substantiam contingendam defertur et progreditur. Est itaque imaginatio similitudo corporis, per sensus quidem corporeos, ex corporum contactu concepta extrinsecus, atque per eosdem sensus introrsus ad partem puriorem corporei spiritus reducta, eique impressa, in summo scilicet corporalis spiritus, et in imo rationalis, corporalem informans, et rationalem contingens.' *De spiritu et anima* XXXIII, ed. by Migne, cols 802–03; *Treatise on the Spirit and the Soul*, trans. by Leiva and Ward, p. 231.

34 Dinzelbacher, *Vision und Visionsliteratur im Mittelalter*.

35 Rüffer, *Werkprozess – Wahrnehmung – Interpretation*, pp. 236–42.

shapes, one man with two heads, an oar in the water can seem broken, and so forth'.[36]

To understand the monastic debates about sensual perception one has to keep in mind another aspect of the idea of perception and discernment. Aelred of Rievaulx wrote in his treatise *Dialogue on the Soul* (*i*. 44): 'Whatever is seen by the eyes, whatever is heard by the ears, whatever is smelled by the nose, whatever is touched by the hands, whatever is tasted by the palate is presented to memory. On all of them reason passes judgement and the will consents'.[37] Important is not the sensual perception itself, rather the ability to deliver a reasonable judgement and the right consent of the will according to theological, spiritual, or moral precepts. The requirement that the monk control himself in every respect became in the end a question of the interplay between will and reason.

Regarding the exterior senses and sight in particular, as well as the mystical union with God as the ultimate aim, there were two ways of dealing with the exterior senses. Bernard of Clairvaux proposed the more radical one:[38] to purify the mind one should suppress sensual perception completely. Following Gregory the Great, Bernard regarded the five senses as windows through which all types of worldly impurities entered the mind, where they wastefully used up memory.[39] Therefore, Bernard demanded the monk to close the 'windows', to block all openings, to clean the memory, and to look with the inner eye towards divine things.[40] Other Cistercian authors were more moderate. They demanded conscious control of the outer senses. Sensual perception could be purified as Aelred of Rievaulx has shown in his concept of the emotions (*affectus*).[41]

Within monastic circles, in particular among the Cistercians, the worldly aspect of sight was heavily criticized for allowing the 'concupiscence of the eyes' or *concupiscentia oculorum*. The phrase goes back to a biblical quotation from the first letter of John (2. 16) and was used by Augustine in his *Confessiones*.[42] The idea was combined with the vice of curiosity (*curiositas*), which distracted

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36 'Sicut navigantibus videntur in terra moveri, quae stant; et intuentibus coelum, sidera stare, quae moventur: et divaricatis oculorum radiis res una duas formas habere videtur, et unus homo duo capita, et in aqua remus infractus, et multa hujusmodi.' *De spiritu et anima* XXIV, ed. by Migne, col. 797; *Treatise on the Spirit and the Soul*, trans. by Leiva and Ward, p. 218.

37 'Memoriae repraesentatur quidquid oculis cernitur, quidquid auditur auribus, quidquid naribus trahitur, quidquid manibus tangitur, quidquid gustu sapit: de quibus omnibus ratio iudicat, consentit uoluntas'. Aelred of Rievaulx, *De anima* i. 44, ed. by Hoste and Talbot p. 698; Aelred of Rievaulx, *Dialogue on the Soul*, trans. by Talbot, p. 56.

38 Coleman, 'Das Bleichen des Gedächtnisses'.

39 Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Job*, xxi. ii. 4, ed. by Adriaen, ii, 1065–67.

40 'Claude fenestras, obsera auditus, foramina obstrue diligenter, et sic demum non subeuntibus novis, sordes poteris expurgare vetustas.' Bernard of Clairvaux, *Ad clericos conversatione* vi. 8, ed. by Winkler, p. 170.

41 Aelred of Rievaulx, *De speculo caritatis*, especially iii. 11. 31–iii. 16. 39, ed. by Hoste and Talbot, pp. 119–23; Rüffer, *Orbis Cisterciensis*, pp. 247–58.

42 Augustinus, *Confessiones* x. xxx. 41–42, ed. by Verheijen, pp. 176f.

the monk's attention from divine things. In a commentary on the chapter of humility of the Rule of Saint Benedict,[43] Bernard of Clairvaux used the image of a soul climbing a ladder, from pride (*superbia*) at the bottom to humility (*humilitas*) at the top. The last step towards true humility was the overcoming of curiosity; in other words, curiosity was regarded as sowing the seeds of a debased life.

Aelred of Rievaulx also devoted a chapter to the concupiscence of the eyes in relation to curiosity in his *Mirror of Charity*, where he differentiated between inward and outward curiosity. Inward curiosity could be found in three things: 'an appetite for harmful or valueless knowledge; prying into the life of another person, not to imitate him but to envy him if his life is good or to scoff at him if it is bad, or simply by curiosity alone to know whether it is good or bad; and lastly, a sort of inquisitive restlessness to know about events and things in the world'.[44] More interesting with respect to sight and the concupiscence of the eyes were his remarks on outward curiosity. This

concerns all the superfluous beauty which the eyes like in various forms, in bright and pleasing colours, different kinds of workmanship, clothing, shoes, vases, pictures, statues, or various creations exceeding necessary and moderate utility — all those things which people who love the world seek out to attract the eyes. […] So it is that even in cloisters of monks you find cranes and hares, does and stags, magpies and ravens — which are certainly not means [used by] Antony and Macarius, but effeminate amusements. None of these things are at all expedient for the poverty of monks, but feed the eyes of the curious. If, preferring the poverty of Jesus to these things which attract the eyes, someone has restricted himself to the limits of what is necessary and has sought the cells of some poor brothers instead of buildings of extravagant size and unnecessary height; if perhaps, on entering an oratory built of unpolished stone he finds no paintings, no sculpture, nothing of great value, no marble strewn with carpets, no walls covered with purple hangings decorated with folk sagas or battles of kings, or at least a series of scriptural scenes; if there is no awe-inspiring glow of candles, no splendour of gleaming metal of the various vessels; if, when none of these meets his gaze, everything he does see begins to seem sordid to him; if he complains that he has been banished from paradise and plunged into some kind of squalid prison, what is the source of this mental anguish, of all this toil?[45]

43 Bernard of Clairvaux, *De gradibus humilitatis et superbiae*, ed. by Winkler.
44 'Nunc de interiori illa curiositate pauca dicenda sunt, quae maxime in tribus constat, in appetitu uidelicet noxiae uel inanis scientiae, in peruestigatione alienae uitae, non ad imitandum, sed ad inuidendum, si bona est, uel insultandum si mala, uel certe sola curiositate tantum, ut sciatur, siue mala sit, siue bona; postremo in curiosa quadam pro saecularium rerum uel actuum agnitione, inquietudine'. Aelred of Rievaulx, *De speculo caritatis* ii. 24. 72, ed. by Hoste and Talbot, p. 100.
45 'Ergo ad exteriorem pertinet curiositatem omnis superflua pulchritudo, quam amant oculi in uariis formis, in nitidis et amoenis coloribus, in diuersis opificiis, in uestibus, calceamentis,

Aelred has not only in mind the religious ideal of a collective poverty, which was very much appreciated by the early Cistercians, but also the words of St Paul (ii Cor. 4. 16–18): 'For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man is corrupted, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen, are temporal; but the things which are not seen, are eternal'.[46]

Criticism of sight as associated with curiosity and pride, as the 'concupiscence of the eyes', was on an individual level a moral criticism of the subject, and at the same time an aesthetic criticism of sensual perception as well as of the use of the exterior senses. On the institutional level of the monastic order, the moral criticism was aimed at material objects; thus it was at the same time an aesthetical criticism on a specific design or on an inappropriate use of objects. This material policy became a key feature of the corporate identity of the Cistercian order.

This self-image was manifest in early Cistercian architecture, wall painting, and windows, as well as pavement design. One of the earliest surviving examples of Cistercian architecture is the Abbey of Fontenay, erected between 1135 and 1147 (Plate II).[47] The abbey church is very plain and austere, without gallery, clerestory, or a segregated crossing. Even the architectural detailing is very simple: the piers, half columns, plain capitals, arcades without mouldings, and rectangular transverse arches in the main barrel vault all enact a minimalist aesthetic. The presbytery is lower than the main nave vault, so that at sunrise in the morning the five windows right over the steps to the presbytery and the six windows at the eastern façade of the presbytery let the morning light in the choir.

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uasis, picturis, sculpturis, diuersisque figmentis usum necessarium et moderatum transgredientibus: quae omnia amatores mundi ad illecebras expetunt oculorum […]. Inde etiam in claustris monachorum grues et lepores, damulae et cerui, picae et corui, non quidem Antoniana et Machariana instrumenta, sed muliebria oblectamenta: quae omnia nequaquam monachorum paupertati consulunt, sed curiosorum oculos pascunt. Si quis ergo paupertatem Iesu, his oculorum illecebris praeferens, infra metas necessitates sese recluserit, et pro superflua illa aedificiorum amplitudine, ac superuacua altitudine, pauperum quorumdam fratrum cubilia expetierit, cum forte ingrediens oratorium impolito constructum lapide, nihil pictum, nihil sculptum, nihil occurrerit pretiosum, non marmora strata tapetibus, non uestiti parietis ostro, historias gentium, pugnas regum, uel certe scripturarum seriem praeferentes, non ille cereorum attonitus fulgor, non in diuersis utensilibus radiantis metalli splendor; cum ergo nihil horum occurrerit intuenti, si incipiant ei cuncta sordere quae cernit, ac se quodam paradiso excussum ac carcerali quodam squalore queratur immersum, unde haec mentis angustia, unde totus hic labor?' Aelred of Rievaulx, *De speculo caritatis* ii. 24. 70, ed. by Hoste and Talbot, pp. 99f.

46 The English translation is taken from the Douay-Rheims 1899 American Edition.
47 Bourgeois, *Abbaye Notre Dame de Fontenay*. It is important to note that even at the time when the first stone churches were erected, Cistercian churches showed a great variety of forms with respect to ground plan and elevation. But their forms were reduced, even if only slightly at times, in comparison to the Black monks. Untermann, *Forma Ordinis*, pp. 225–426.

FIGURE 4.2. 'Day stairs to the monk's dormitory, painted double joints', Fountains (North Yorkshire). Photo by the author.

Given that the church has no clerestory windows, in the evening, at sunset, light comes mainly through the seven windows of the west façade. This simple light-dramaturgy was, I argue, intended to stimulate not only theological thoughts but cosmological ones as well. With respect to sophisticated interpretations of light and number one has to be very cautious. In general, Cistercian monks were not highly educated, and from the mid-thirteenth century onwards the order had problems encouraging monks to take up studies at the newly established Cistercian colleges.[48]

The early Cistercian houses also had very simple wall decoration. Ashlar masonry became a value in itself. The wall surface could be left plain, or it could be whitewashed or plastered. In some cases the joints of the regular masonry were accentuated but not according to the real joints. These false joints were painted in white (a single line) or white and red (a double line). At Fountains Abbey in Yorkshire there are still remnants of the different types of wall decoration (Figure 4.2).

In the second half of the twelfth century, the pavements, in particular those within the monastic churches, became much more elaborated. The simple clay floors were replaced by pavements made out of floor tiles. Apart from the decorative effect, this had some practical benefits. A tile pavement could be better cleaned, and when used on the upper floors it became a part of fire protection. But tile floors could also be problematic. In his *Apologia ad Guillelmum abbatem* Bernard of Clairvaux criticized tessellated floors,

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48   Lekai, *The Cistercians*, pp. 78–89.

FIGURE 4.3. 'Mosaic pavement of the south transept chapel of the abbey church',
Byland Abbey (North Yorkshire). Photo by the author.

especially those with figurative images.[49] The Cistercians also used floor tiles
in moderate colours to generate larger geometrical ornaments like at Byland
Abbey (Figure 4.3), or to produce single patterns consisting of four tiles like
at Eberbach.[50] Artificially speaking, the floor tiles were not very elaborated,
but they were nevertheless expensive. Around 1200 the first complaints in
the general chapter about the design of larger floors appeared; in 1205, for
example, the Abbot of Pontigny was called on to remove his new church
floor because it was regarded as superfluous and curious ('superfluitate sua
et curiosa varietate').[51]

Finally, I wish to make a few remarks on the window design and the quality
of window glass. Openings are not only interesting concerning the window
designs themselves, but also with respect to their roles as compositional
elements within a façade, as can be seen at Noirlac (Figure 4.4). The position
and numbers of windows could stimulate theological ideas. Bernard of Clairvaux
speculated on numbers in his *Sentences* (*i.* 25), giving eleven possibilities for
the interpretation of the number three alone.[52] Furthermore, in his *Parabolae*
(*iv*) the Abbot of Clairvaux gave an example of how one could speculate on

49 Bernard of Clairvaux, *Apologia ad Guillelmum abbatem* xii. 28, ed. by Winkler, esp. p. 196.
50 Beaulah, 'Thirteenth Century Square-Tile Mosaic Pavements'; Norton, 'Early
    Tile Pavements'; Landgraf, *Ornamentierte Bodenfliesen des Mittelalters in Süd- und
    Westdeutschland*, i, 72–78.
51 *Statuta Capitulorum Generalium Ordinis Cisterciensis*, ed. by Canivez; for 1205, see 1205:10, i,
    309; for 1210, see 1210:34, ii, 375, and for a general interdict, see 1218:5, ii, 486.
52 Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sententiae* i. 25, ed. by Winkler, pp. 280ff.

Figure 4.4. 'Eastern part of the abbey church, view from the northeast', Noirlac (Cher). Photo by the author.

windows, both as openings in the wall and with respect to their numbers.[53] But the allegorical interpretation of numbers based on architectural elements seems rather an exception within the Cistercian context. In general four things have to be said: First, the number and position of windows had to fit with the architectural structure or with the façade. Second, regarding the single building it is often difficult to decide whether the solution was adopted or invented. Third, the numbers don't necessarily have to be interpreted, and if one wishes to do so, the numbers three and four are commonplaces. Finally, the so-called three window group (two round headed windows or two lancets crowned by an oculus) is not limited to the Cistercians.

Spiritually, the quality of light was important. That meant not only the changing qualities of light during the day or over the course of the year, but also the effects which were generated by the quality of the glass itself, in particular its translucency and its colour. The early Cistercians decided to have only white window glass; in 1159 multicoloured glass (*vitreae diversorum colorum*) was forbidden by the general chapter,[54] and in 1182 images with narrative scenes (*vitrae depictae*) were as well.[55] As a consequence the Cistercians were responsible for the development of a tradition of high-quality grisaille

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53 Bernard of Clairvaux, *Parabolae* vi, ed. by Winkler, p. 868.
54 1159:9, in *Twelfth-Century Statutes*, ed. by Waddell, p. 71.
55 1182:11, in *Twelfth-Century Statutes*, ed. by Waddell, p. 101; Zakin, *French Cistercian Grisaille Glass*; Lillich, 'Recent Scholarship Concerning Cistercian Windows'.

FIGURE 4.5. 'Abbey church, window with interlace decoration', Obazine (Corrèze). Photo by the author.

windows with geometrical patterns in the twelfth century. The windows have either interlaced or floral motifs, as can be seen at the Abbey of Obazine (Figure 4.5), where twelfth-century windows are still preserved. These designs are intended to concentrate the gaze and to play with light as a divine sign.

In summary, Cistercian spirituality emphasized meditation and contemplation within a reformed daily routine based on a stricter observance of the Benedictine Rule (*puritas regulae*), and the Cistercians' ideals had a profound impact on medieval aesthetics. They built their monasteries far from settlements and, a few exceptions aside, Cistercians excluded laypeople from the church and the cloister.[56] The cloister was the centre of the monk's life, which was to be affected by worldly affairs as little as possible. The main objective was the unification with God in contemplation, and to strengthen one's focus on divine things it was regarded necessary to avoid visual distraction. The monk should control his sensual perception, purify the perceived images, look with the inner eye, and direct his spiritual attention towards God. The early Cistercians combined the spiritual ascent to God with a negative aesthetics, avoiding all figurative images and thereby preventing all that could stimulate the concupiscence of the eyes and curiosity. The demand for a very austere and plain visual design was the earthly complement to an extraordinary spiritual path to salvation.

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56 The limited access of laypeople to the church or the cloister was based on two aspects: particular liturgical offices (e.g. procession, burial, Maunday) and social rank (founder, nobility, rulers). Those persons who were permitted to enter the church or the cloister were escorted by a monk or lay brother. Untermann, *Forma Ordinis*, pp. 72–90, 233–82.

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BISSERA V. PENTCHEVA

The Liveliness of the Methexic Image

Methexis

The Greek verb μετέχω designates the act of partaking in the Eucharist. In this ritual the faithful commune with the divine in real time and space. I use 'methexis' to designate this participatory aspect of the medieval cult image. It can be manifested in the way the *imago* shares in the essence of the prototype through the relics it contains, or by means of the space it occupies on the altar, or by its capacity to expand in the real time and space of the observer by means of the temporal liveliness manifested through glitter and shadow. Methexis-participation and phenomenal liveliness are here contrasted with mimesis, which designates art's imitation of nature and the production of a lifelike form. Methexis is a critical term that allows me to analyse medieval art, especially the staging of cult statues, as multimedia installations. Modern viewers often have no access to the liveliness of the *imago*. This is because the majority of these objects are displayed in museums and illuminated with steady electric light. These clinical conditions allow viewers to appreciate the success or failure of the mimetic sculpting of form. Yet, caged in glass cases, these cult images are lifeless; they are removed from the ritual and the phenomenal changes in the ambient air, light, and movement.[1] Methexis allows me to engage the medieval installation and thus activate aspects of the former phenomenal animation lying dormant in these images. New in the field is this recognition of the temporality of liveliness.[2]

Zainab Bahrani brought up the term *methexis* in her discussion of Near Eastern art in order to challenge the foundation of Western art history. The latter views the imitation-mimesis as the desired goal of most artistic production, privileging the development towards naturalism witnessed in classical Greek art. But what happens with traditions that do not conform to mimesis or at least do not place mimesis at the top of their aesthetic hierarchy? In mimesis,

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[1] Already in 2007 my research on the Byzantine icon had introduced this phenomenological dimension of study. See my new research project, https://enchantedimages.stanford.edu.

[2] While this was the first essay I wrote on the Western cult *imago*, a subsequent article I prepared for the conference in Aguilar de Campóo in 2016 appeared earlier in published form, Pentcheva, 'Glittering Eyes'.

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image and prototype belong to two different ontologies (essences): a painting is pigment on wood or canvass, while the sitter is often a living being. Methexis, by contrast, marks the capacity of the image to participate in the essence of the prototype rather than just imitate its form. In Bahrani's analysis, the Jericho skull dated to 7000–8000 bc exemplifies methexis; it shares in the ancestral body, because it is the skull itself — a relic — linked to the absent person in a substantial way.[3] The medieval bust reliquary operates in a similar methexic way. It shares in the materiality of the prototype through the relics it contains, and thus it transcends the limits of mimetic dualism.[4] Methexis belongs to a different aesthetic system, where the success or failure of mimesis is no longer the determining factor based on which to ascribe value to the work of art. For medieval art, which is frequently outside the classical norms of beauty, the illusionistic rendition of form and space, and known-by-name artists, methexis liberates this artistic tradition from the aesthetic constraints of lifelikeness and the taxonomies of great masters. Instead, its anonymity, its temporal material flux, and its participation in the religious ritual speak to a conception of art making that bears affinity with the 'happenings' and systems aesthetics in contemporary art.[5]

I introduce a new aspect to methexis that is not addressed in Bahrani's work — the material flux — a term with which I identify the phenomenal liveliness of the image expressed by the shifting appearance of the radiant skin covering the statue with metal and gems. This shimmering skin changes its visual aspects as a result of movement of the ambient light and air. Phenomenal shadows, glitter, and partial occlusion are some of the temporal manifestations of this unstable polymorphy. These ephemeral changes in appearance create a sense of movement and life in the *imago*. The methexic animation capitalizes on temporal liveliness as opposed to the mimetic imitation of form that achieves lifelikeness but lacks a temporal dimension. The unfolding of the material flux in the real time and space of the beholder is what makes this polymorphy methexic, participatory, extending in the real.

This concern with mimesis and methexis is not new. Medieval image theory as it developed during the period of Byzantine Iconoclasm (726–843) debated it extensively.[6] The iconoclasts defended the methexic image and identified it with the Eucharist: an *imago* that shares essence without preserving the form of the prototype.[7] The iconophiles distanced themselves from viewing the

3 Bahrani, *The Infinite Image*, pp. 40–57.
4 Keller, 'Zur Entstehung der sakralen Vollskuptur in der ottonischen Zeit'; Dahl, 'Heavenly Images'; Hahn, 'The Voices of the Saints'; Reudenbach, 'Individuum ohne Bildnis?'; Reudenbach, *Reliquiare als Heiligkeitsbeweis und Echtheitszeugnis*; Buettner, 'From Bones to Stones'; Angenendt, 'Der "ganze" und "unverweste" Leib'; Angenendt, *Heilige und Reliquien*.
5 Kaprow, 'The Legacy of Jackson Pollock'. On systems art, see Burnham, 'Systems Aesthetics'.
6 For a summary and bibliography, see Noble, *Images, Iconoclasm and the Carolingians*.
7 In the 740s the iconoclast emperor Constantine V (741–75) wrote in his *Peuseis* (Inquires) that 'an *eikōn* of his [Christ's] body is the bread, which we accept, as it morphs (*morphazōn*)

holy icon as partaking in the essence of the prototype and defined the sacred image through mimesis. The icon was thus understood as an imitation of the form of Christ or the saints, which preserved most successfully its relation to the prototype by the shared name — the inscription written next to the figure. While the mimetic image was just an empty shell with a name, its lifelike form was recognized as capable to stimulate memory and to stir affect in the viewer.[8] We encounter the same insistence on the fact that the image can bring forth πόθος-desire in the writings developed by the papal court.[9]

The definition of the sacred icon as it emerged after Byzantine Iconoclasm tied representation to mimesis. Yet the shape of the sacred images pushed beyond the constraints of painting into relief and sculpture in the round and also employed vibrant materials such as metal and gems.[10] In this way, a new methexic dimension grew. The images could produce liveliness non-mimetically through the way their radiant skin responded to flickering candlelight, human breath, and draughts of air. This material flux is materially produced, yet immaterial. It expands into the real and makes the metaphysical sensorially perceptible without tying it to an anthropomorphic form.[11] Caroline Bynum, who has established the study of medieval materiality, recognizes that the medieval image is non-mimetic and that its power issues from its matter, saying 'to materialize is to animate'. Yet she does not recognize the potential for animation to issue from the accidents of appearance caused by changes in the ambience.[12] Phenomenology offers a new approach that allows us to explore this material flux and helps us recognize how through it, the medieval image

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into his flesh, so as to become a *typos* of his body', Constantine V's *Peuseis* (Inquiries), ed. by Migne, col. 337B, recorded in Patriarch Nicephorus, *Antirrheticus II adversus Constantinum Copronymum*, ed. by Hennerhof, p. 55, n. 167. On the *Peuseis*, see Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm during the Reign of Constantine V*, pp. 37–52; Pentcheva, *The Sensual Icon*, pp. 57–96. Methexis also identifies the performative icon that is the faithful who sings; see Pentcheva, *Hagia Sophia*, pp. 76–98. I have developed the same argument about the performative icon in the Latin West in Pentcheva, 'Performative Images and Cosmic Sound'.

8   Barber, 'From Transformation to Desire'; Barber, *Figure and Likeness*.

9   Chazelle, 'Pictures, Books, and the Illiterate'; Chazelle, 'Memory, Instruction, Worship'; Kessler, 'Real Absence', esp. pp. 1176–78; Thunø, *Image and Relic*, pp. 140–41; Noble, *Images, Iconoclasm and the Carolingians*, pp. 146–47; Kessler, *Neither Man, Nor God*; and most recently Dell'Acqua, *Iconophilia*, pp. 121–91.

10 On the importance of light, shining, and glitter in the specific media of glass, enamel, and mosaic promoted in the ninth-century both in papal Rome and later in post-Iconoclast Constantinople, see Pentcheva, 'The Performative Icon', pp. 632–40; Pentcheva, *The Sensual Icon*, pp. 82–120; Thunø, *Image and Relic*, pp. 140–60; Dell'Acqua, *Iconophilia*, pp. 121–91. On the glittering materiality, see Schmitt, 'Introduction', p. 13. On the genesis of Christian cult statues, see Keller, 'Zur Entstehung der sakralen Vollskuptur in der ottonischen Zeit'; Forsyth, *Throne of Wisdom*; Hamann-MacLean, 'Das Problem der Karolingischen Grossplastik'; Dahl, 'Heavenly Images'; Huber and Huber, 'Piété chrétienne ou paganisme?'; Wirth, *L'Image médiévale*; Belting, *Bild und Kult*; Belting, *Likeness and Presence*.

11 Pentcheva, *Hagia Sophia*, pp. 71–98.

12 Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, pp. 38, 41, 53–61, 89, 122, 125. With a focus on semiotics, see also Kumler and Lakey, 'The Material Sense of Things in the Middle Ages'.

FIGURE 5.1. 'Mixed-media relief icon of the Archangel Michael', Venezia, Il Tesoro di San Marco, late tenth–early eleventh century. Photo © Bissera V. Pentcheva.

can be simultaneously a mimetic form that on occasion acquires temporal liveliness. The *imago* can thus preserve the ontological dualism (that image and prototype do not share essence), but it can also acquire methexic aspects, invading the real time and space of the beholder.[13]

I first explored this temporal liveliness in the Byzantine mixed-media relief icon back in 2007 with a study on the late tenth-century image of the Archangel Michael, today at the treasury of San Marco in Venice (Figure 5.1).[14] In this experiment the icon was taken out of its glass case and placed on a table with its back propped on the wall. All electric lights were switched off, leaving only the morning light to illuminate the interior of the treasury. A candle was lit and moved slowly across the surface of the icon from left to right and back again, from the bottom to the top and reverse. The changing source and angle of the falling rays from the candle produced shifting shadows and glittering spots that changed in position across the golden surface. Most striking were the moments when an incinerating disk of light brought to prominence the outline of the angel's iris. The radiant metal skin of Western cult images is an invitation to extend this phenomenological exploration to the artistic production of the Latin West (see Figures 5.1–2).

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13   Phenomenology is a new direction; see Pentcheva, 'Glittering Eyes'; Pentcheva, 'Temporality and Embodiment'; Pentcheva, 'Optical and Acoustic Aura in Medieval Art'; Pentcheva, 'Performative Images and Cosmic Sound in the Exultet Liturgy of Southern Italy'.

14   For the video, visit <https://vimeo.com/482358875>. See also Pentcheva, *The Sensual Icon*; Pentcheva, 'The Performative Icon', pp. 631–55.

Beate Fricke has offered the most in-depth engagement with these cult *imagines*.[15] Her study, published in German in 2007 and then in English translation in 2014, is concerned with the emergence and legitimation of the statues of the saints in the Latin West. Their origins reveal a continual anxiety about how to separate the Christian sacred image and its correct veneration from the legacy of the pagan idol and its worship. Miniatures in the ninth-century Stuttgart Psalter (Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, MS Lat. 23) and the manuscript of Prudentius's *Psychomachia* and *Peristephanon* (Bern, Bürgerbibliothek, MS Lat. 264) depict such pagan idols and show how their seductive material presence stirs powerful religious feelings that jeopardize the possibility for sacred images in Christian devotion. The fear of the material image in Western religious thought is so strong that when a book like the *Liber miraculorum Sanctae Fidis* is written in the early eleventh century with the goal to examine the veneration of statues in the cult of saints, it refuses to introduce the *imago* of Ste Foy in the first chapter. Instead, it sets the first encounter with the saint as a dream vision experienced by the blind Guibert.[16] The *Liber miraculorum* uses blindness and dream to establish a distance between the faithful and the *imago*.[17] True sight is given to those carrying the right belief, who could see the saint internally, without the use of their material eyes. As Fricke's analysis reveals, this vision is a subjective experience that is confirmed by faith rather than by seeing the exterior materiality of the *imago*.[18] The manufactured *imago* further questions the validity of mimetic lifelikeness. The statue of Ste Foy is dissemblant, a bricolage of parts intended to obviate a simple mimetic resemblance between saint and the representation. The material image does not strive to reproduce the form, nor does it help the viewer conjure the teenage Ste Foy at the moment of her martyrdom.[19] The dissemblant *imago* thus challenges the aesthetic prioritization of lifelikeness in the making of the medieval cult image.

Fricke remarks on the material flux of the golden statue but uses this observation to develop her thesis about the heterogeneity of the image: 'those who know Sainte Foy from reproductions are astonished upon seeing her figure for the first time shimmering in the dim light of the church. Published photographs of the statue show it evenly illuminated and with gleaming reflections of light, facilitating the art historian's dissecting gaze upon a rather heterogeneous sculpture'.[20] The steady electric light illuminating the statue in

15 Fricke, *Ecce Fides*; Fricke, *Fallen Idols, Risen Saints*.

16 *Liber miraculorum Sancte Fidis*, ed. by Bouillet (hereafter *LM*), ch. 1, pp. 46–47; *The Book of Ste Foy*, trans. by Sheingorn, p. 77; Fricke, *Fallen Idols, Risen Saints*, pp. 23–145. The first two books of *LM* were written between 1015 and 1021 by Bernard of Angers, trained in the circle of Fulbert of Chartres.

17 Fricke, *Fallen Idols, Risen Saints*, pp. 23–145.

18 Fricke, *Fallen Idols, Risen Saints*, pp. 149–216.

19 Fricke, *Fallen Idols, Risen Saints*, pp. 149–52, 175–77, 183–86.

20 Fricke, *Fallen Idols, Risen Saints*, pp. 213–14, 178–94.

its museum setting allows the study of the dissemblant, non-mimetic character of the statue. Yet we should also not lose sight of the original display which did not freeze the appearance of the statue, but instead produced a continuous flow of diverse impressions. This phenomenon of the glittering materiality constitutes a surplus, exceeding the limits of the discursive/descriptive mode. As a result, the statue functions not just as an 'earthly sign' of the saint's glorious resurrected body, but its material flux performs in real time and space what is imagined as the inviolate, impassable, sidereal body of the elect in heaven. The temporal liveliness also allows us to view the statue as the centrepiece of a multimedia installation. I pursue this phenomenological direction by focusing on the twelfth-century *imago* of St Theofrid (Chaffre) at le Monastier-sur-Gazeille, near Le Puy en-Velay, France.[21] My analysis privileges the performance of radiant materiality and records its kinaesthetic and temporal aspects through both still photography and video.

The *Imago* of St Theofrid (Chaffre)

The statue of St Theofrid is made of wood and covered with a silver revetment; the robe is elegant in its simplicity and in the regularity of its vertical folds. The cuffs have gilded strips, and the same decoration with the addition of crystals and gems gives prominence to the collar and chest (Figure 5.2). His golden hair is perfectly combed. But most striking is his Roman face: his cheeks are chiselled, his eyebrows are elongated and slightly arching, his nose is straight, his lips thin and closed. The large olive-shaped eyes are formed with irises set in a groove, while a dot indenting the centre marks the pupil. His raised arms are modern replacements of what was damaged and lost in the wake of the French Revolution and the secularization of Church property. These replicas model the original gestures of holding with one hand and raising the other in blessing.

Modern visitors encounter this statue in the small museum situated next to the monastery's church. Placed outside its original ecclesiastical surroundings, the bust stands in a glass case bathed by steady electric lights. The reflecting surfaces of its polished silver create areas of luminosity at the ball of the head, forehead, and shoulders. In these ambient conditions, the image is dormant; his eyes are stilled. The space is small, allowing for an intimate encounter. But this

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21 St Theofrid's feast day is October 19 (Roman use) or November 18 (Gallic use), and his life is recorded in *Acta Sanctorum*, ed. by Bolland and others, October, viii, 515–21. For the monastery, see *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Saint-Chaffre du Monastier*, ed. by Chevalier. See also Pacaut, 'Les Bénédictins de Saint-Chaffre' and Cabrero-Ravel, Galland, and Sanial, 'Nouvelles réflexions sur l'ancienne abbatiale saint-Théofrède du Monastier'.

For the statue, *La France Romane*, no. 295, pp. 385. I am grateful to Pierre Taillefer (DRAC), Bernard Sanial, and Janet Darne who gave me access to study and to photograph the statue of St Chaffre at le Monastier-sur-Gazeille March 18, 2015 and February 6, 2019.

FIGURE 5.2. 'Silver-revetted statue of St Theofrid (Chaffre)', Le Monastier-sur-Gazeille, twelfth century. Photo © Bissera V. Pentcheva.

meeting with the *imago* differs drastically from the medieval experience of seeing the statue at the end of the long horizontal axis traversing the interior from the entry gates of the western end all the way to the sanctuary on the east. The glittering object, seen contre-jour, against the rays of light coming from the apse, would have gratified the avid gaze pulled towards the altar. This connection to the altar was very important, for the relics of St Theofrid and Eude (the first abbot of the monastery) were deposited in it.[22] Thus, by virtue of its placement on the altar, the *imago* preserved its link to the body of the saint.

Coming back to the museum setting where the statue is currently displayed, when the electric lights are switched off and a moving source of light is introduced into the darkened room, then the statue comes to life. The round groove outlining the iris catches and reflects the light, at moments creating an incandescent ring with a radiant pupil (Plate III). This awakened gaze arrests the viewer and quickly reverses the subject-object positions. The visitor finds one's self reduced to being the object of the statue's eyes. Similarly, the shadows cast by the now modern replicas of the original arms slowly travel up and down the chest and neck with the movement of the light source. With these shifts a form of supernatural response emerges

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22 According to the late eleventh-century cartulary, the relics of the saint were immured in the altar, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Saint-Chaffre du Monastier*, ed. by Chevalier, p. 45. Sources from 1822 mention the presence of three thecae with relics of Sts Theofrid and Eude kept at the altar of Le Monastier, *Acta Sanctorum*, ed. by Bolland and others, October, viii, 522.

FIGURE 5.3. 'Silver-revetted statue of St Theofrid (Chaffre), detail of shining of rising shadow of the left arm', Le Monastier-sur-Gazeille, twelfth century. Photo © Bissera V. Pentcheva.

FIGURE 5.4. 'Silver-revetted statue of St Theofrid (Chaffre), detail of rising shadow of the left arm reaching the neck', Le Monastier-sur-Gazeille, twelfth century. Photo © Bissera V. Pentcheva.

as if the ghost hands of the dark shadows move to accept a gift and give a blessing (Figures 5.3–4).

The glitter of the eyes and the moving shadows of the hands are phenomenal aspects of the image that expand in the real time and space of the beholder. They are moments that bring about the mixture of temporalities: the statue's twelfth century with the visitor's twenty-first century, making dimensions of past performativity emerge in the current moment. These kinaesthetic and temporal aspects of the medieval image function as non-mimetic means of producing presence. *Imago*, viewer, and ambiance are interconnected.[23]

Gems and Eyes

While the Western *imago* draws its power from all three (material flux, proximity to relics, and the Eucharist), the Byzantine relief icon anchors its *methexis* just on the phenomenological play of its radiant skin (see Figure 5.1). The mixed-media relief icon of the Archangel Michael in San Marco is not a relic container, and there is no attested Byzantine practice of placing icons on the altar. Thus, the image only relies on its glittering surface to produce liveliness non-mimetically and non-essentially. The performance of the icon's vibrant materiality shares in the appearance of the divine without sharing in its substance. I identify this process with the function of metaphor in language, where one aspect of a thing is equated to another, allowing one to see similarity in dissimilarity. Metaphor is a substitution operating on the basis of analogy.[24]

Metaphor allows us to penetrate deeper in the way the materiality of the radiant skin of the *imago* functions. The many gems and crystals on the surfaces of the metal revetments covering these images could be perceived as surrogate eyes (Plate III, Figure 5.5). They share in the glitter of the living eyes, a phenomenon of shared appearance that insists on the similarity of ephemeral exterior aspects rather than shared substance. A passage from the *Liber miraculorum* of Ste Foy reveals the medieval awareness of this perceptual connection between gems and eyes. When discussing the face of one Gerbert, whose eyeballs were restored by Ste Foy, the author, Bernard of Angers, comments:

> You might see gems [Gerbert's restored eyes] sparkling in the midst of the old scars marking the wounds of his eyes. Though their restoration

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23 Merleau-Ponty, 'The Intertwining – the Chiasm'.

24 Dirven and Pörings, *Metaphor and Metonymy in Comparison and Contrast*, here, see especially Jackobson, 'The Metaphoric and Metonymic Poles' and Dirven, 'Metonymy and Metaphor'. See also Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*.

FIGURE 5.5. 'Face of Ste Foy', Conques, Abbaye Sainte-Foy, late ninth and early eleventh century. Photo © Bissera V. Pentcheva.

was contrary to nature, his eyes shine now just as they did before, not like glass but like flesh.[25]

In the first line the word 'gems' substitutes 'eyes'. The sparkling eyes possess the appearance of the shining jewels: similarity of exterior aspects rises from dissimilarity of substance. It is the glitter of the gem that is associated with the sparkle of the pupils. Analogy of outward appearances brings together jewels and shining pupils, a connection established through presence effects and not essence. Then the next sentence complicates this non-essentialist connection between the vitreous and sarcous. While on the surface a distinction is made between glass and flesh, the very word used — *carneus* — is contaminated with associations with flesh: *carneus* evokes 'carnelian', the red flesh-like stone, whose Latin name *corneolus* gradually transformed into *carnelius* by associating it with the word *carneus* or 'fleshy'.[26] Thus rather than building a separation, further confusion between the two entities — gems and eyes, breathing human flesh and vibrant vitreous *imago* — ensues, enforcing the

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25 'cerneres inter antiquas stigmatum cicatrices pupilarum micare gemmas, inque prioris nature modum restitutos contra naturam oculos non vitreos sed carneos resplendere', *LM* i. 2, p. 20; most recent edition, *Liber miraculorum Sancte Fidis*, ed. by Robertini, p. 90. *The Book of Ste Foy*, trans. by Sheingorn, p. 55.

26 *Oxford English Dictionary*.

FIGURE 5.6. 'Tympanum, detail showing two female saints with vitreous eye infills', Conques, Abbaye Sainte-Foy, early twelfth century. Photo © Bissera V. Pentcheva.

listener to fall into the trap of the seducing appearances, where the real and phantasmal merge.

In the *Liber miraculorum*, this fusion of the vitreous and *carneus* is further sustained by the encounter with the golden *imago*. The statue of Ste Foy has large dark-blue irises made of glass (Figure 5.5), whose sparkle and translucency immediately reveal their shared link with the jewels decorating the crown, her body, and the throne.[27] Ste Foy thus transforms into a many-eyed seraphim. Another manifestation of gem-like eyes can be seen in the early twelfth-century tympanum at Conques; it still displays figures whose eyes have preserved their vitreous-like lead-infill (Figure 5.6). The female saints in the lower register entering the bosom of Abraham stare with their glass-like eyes at the visitors. One is tempted to imagine their sparkling effect when seen at sunset. At such moments the glittering reflections would realize the

27 Gaborit-Chopin and Taburet-Delahaye, *Le Trésor de Conques*, no. 1, pp. 18–29; Taralon and Taralon-Carlini, 'La Majesté d'or de sainte Foy de Conques', esp. pp. 26–30.

principle of the dominant medieval theory of vision — extramission — that the eyes send off rays that touch and penetrate.[28]

The Dynamic Gaze

The kinaesthetic aspects of the Byzantine relief icon and the Western golden *imago* introduce the dimension of temporality in the study of medieval art and bring to the fore the synergy between a 'performative' viewer and a 'performative' image.[29] This section focuses on the polymorphy of vision produced through the interaction of viewer, object, and space. In a traditional museum setting the *imago* seems expressionless and 'dead', living only through being the object of the spectator's gaze.[30] Agency is given to the viewer and his or her act of seeing. But moving candlelight changes this relationship, confusing who is in possession of agency and revealing that animation is dialectic, issuing from the synergy of *imago*, beholder, and environment. I began to film this liveliness of the Western golden statues back in 2015.[31] Two years later in 2017, Ivan Foletti illuminated with candlelight and recorded the changes in the appearance of the statue of Ste Foy.[32] He remarked on the perceived animation, more specifically on the reflected flames in the irises of the statue when the candle is brought closer, but he did not explore how movement and gaze are linked.[33] I argue that the unstable, moving light animates both the eyes and arms of the statue causing phenomenal shadows to sail across. These real shadows give the impression as if the *imago* moves its eyes and hands and is thus in possession of agency (Figures 5.3–4). Moreover, the perceived movement of the phenomenal shadows is always in a direction opposite to the movement of the source of light.[34]

The experiment of moving a burning candle in front of the image aims to simulate some of the conditions of prayer or procession. A twelfth-century stained-glass window from Troyes cathedral shows the *imago* of St Nicholas raised on a column in the sanctuary and a pilgrim falling on his knees, while reaching out with his hand to touch the icon.[35] This low viewpoint differs

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28 On extramission, see Lindberg, *Theories of Vision* and Schleusener-Eichholz, *Das Auge im Mittelalter*.

29 Cynthia Hahn introduced the term 'performative viewer', Hahn, *Strange Beauty*, p. 27. On the interaction between viewer and image and its effect on the perceived vivacity of the representation, see Fricke, *Fallen Idols, Risen Saints*, p. 150.

30 Fricke, *Fallen Idols, Risen Saints*, pp. 150–57.

31 This manuscript was the first article I wrote on the subject, then in 2016 came my second article, Pentcheva, 'Glittering Eyes'.

32 For Foletti's video, see Center for Early Medieval Studies, 'St Foy Révélée'.

33 Foletti, 'Meeting Saint Faith'.

34 On the chiastic pairing of the movement of the gaze and the source of light, see Pentcheva, 'Glittering Eyes', pp. 224–26.

35 Musée de Cluny, 'Miracles de saint Nicolas'. See also Carson Pastan, 'Fit for a Count'.

drastically from the museum setting, where the bust is set on eye-level with the viewer. In prayer, the vantage — the higher viewing point — is given over to the *imago*. In turn, this helps the development of the perception of the statue having agency (Figure 5.5). Further changes introduced by moving the candlelight up and down across the face of the statue help secure this sense of agency in the image. When the candlelight is directly at the level of the eyes, the outline of the iris catches a shine and produces the incinerating gaze of the *imago* (Plate III). Then when the candle ascends, shadows concentrate in the lower lids, and the eyes of the statue appear to look down (Figure 5.3). This is also the vantage point of the one who is prostrate in prayer on the floor and looks up towards the statue. Finally, when the candlelight reverses direction and descends, shadows in the eyes of the *imago* concentrate in the lower lid giving the impression as if the saint looks up. In both cases — kneeling/standing viewer and ascending/descending candles — the movement of the statue's gaze is directly opposite to the direction of the movement of the faithful or the light source.[36] The same dynamism can also be observed with the movement of the shadows of the statue's hands across its chest. The shadows rise when the light descends, giving the impression as if the statue proffers its hands to the viewer to receive a gift. And vice versa, when the light descends, the shadows rise as if the statue has received the gifts and is now blessing the one kneeling in front of it in prayer (Figure 5.4).

Material Flux and the *Liber miraculorum Sanctae Fidis*

How do the written sources record the material flux? The *Liber miraculorum* of Ste Foy has been the main text studied by art historians in order to gain insight into the perception and experience of the golden *imago*.[37] The first two books of the *Liber miraculorum* were written between 1015 and 1021 by Bernard of Angers, trained in the circle of Fulbert of Chartres.[38] Fricke has offered the most sustained analysis of this text. She has revealed how Bernard privileges spiritual seeing. The faithful in possession of true belief senses the virtue of the saint and encounters Ste Foy in an internal vision; hence the first miracle narrated is that of the blind Gerbert. True faith further allows one to recognize the saint even if the external container — the golden *imago* — is seductively reminiscent of pagan idols. But along with internal vision, Bernard also paradoxically defends the legitimacy of

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36 I have discussed this phenomenon as a chiasm or phenomenal *contrapposto*, Pentcheva, 'Glittering Eyes', pp. 224–26.

37 Fricke, *Fallen Idols, Risen Saints*, pp. 147–208; Foletti, 'Meeting Saint Faith'.

38 *The Book of Ste Foy*, trans. by Sheingorn, pp. 22–26. On the intermingling of the *litterati* and *rustici* registers, see Remensnyder, 'Un problème de cultures ou de culture?'.

direct eye-contact; his own narrative is a justification for the authenticity of evidence gained by sight as he comes to legitimize the veneration of these images by seeing them in person.[39] Foletti draws the conclusion that the *Liber miraculorum* carries the traces of two different viewer experiences: the *literati* for whom the statue is a relic container and simulates a vision of the saint in paradise, and the second group, that of the *rustici*, for whom the statue becomes alive in candlelight.[40]

My aim here is to explore to what extent the *Liber miraculorum* engages or fails to engage the performative dimension of the golden *imago*. Why is this important? It is because the *Liber miraculorum* is the one source used in all contemporary interpretation of the medieval cult image; it privileges spiritual vision and to a certain extent devalues the temporal liveliness of the actual physical object. As a result, the interpretation of the medieval *imago* have tended towards the appraisal of the symbolic over the sensorial.[41] In Chapter 13 Bernard describes his first encounter with a golden statue, that of St Gerald at Aurillac.

> People erect a statue for their own saint, of gold or silver or some other metal, in which the head of the saint or a rather important part of the body is reverently preserved. […] The statue of St Gerald [is] placed above the altar, gloriously fashioned out of the purest gold and the most precious stones. It is an image made with such a precision to the face of the human form that it seemed to see with its attentive, observant gaze the great many peasants seeing it and to gently grant with its reflecting eyes the prayers of those praying before it.[42]

Bernard recounts the facts about golden *imagines*: they are containers of relics; they stand on the altar; they are covered in shining metals and gems. Relics, proximity to the Eucharist, and material flux are all the methexic elements I identified at the beginning of this article. Bernard moves from the general information about such statues to the specific example — the statue of St Gerald. He comments on its mimetic power to successfully model a human face and thus to appear seeing its viewers seeing it. The repetition of the verb 'to see' — *video* — in its various forms (*videatur*, *vedere*, *videntes*)

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39   Fricke, *Fallen Idols, Risen Saints*, pp. 156–63.

40   Foletti, 'Meeting Saint Faith', pp. 312–15. Foletti keeps this distinction between *literati* and *rustici* in contrast to Remensnyder who sees a fluidity between the two, 'Un problème de cultures ou de culture?'.

41   Fricke, *Fallen Idols, Risen Saints*, pp. 157–65, 178.

42   'de auro sive argento seu quolibet alio metallo, sancto suo quisque pro posse statuam erigat, in qua caput sancti, vel potior pars corporis venerabilius condatur […] sancti Gerladi statuam super altare positam, auro purissimo ac lapidibus preciosissimis insignem et ita ad humane figure vultum expresse effigiatam, ut plerisque rusticis videntes se perspicati intuit videatur videre, oculisque reverberantibus precantum votis aliquando placidius favere', *LM* i. 13, pp. 46–47; *Liber miraculorum Sancte Fidis*, ed. by Robertini, p. 112; *The Book of Ste Foy*, trans. by Sheingorn, p. 77.

establishes a field of reciprocal vision, while it simultaneously injects its own disclaimer and suspicion. The statue just 'seems to' or 'appears' to see. This is Bernard's doubt; for him the statue just simulates seeing. The same doubt controls also the last segment of the sentence as the statue 'appears' to favour with his 'reverberating' eyes those who pray to it. The element of doubt fights the uniqueness and extraordinary nature of his sensorial experience.

At this point sensation surpasses language, and a synaesthesis is introduced by the word *reverberare*, meaning 'to reflect, to re-echo, to dazzle'.[43] Saint Gerald's reverberating gaze exceeds the register of one sense; it both speaks and sees, and bedazzles its audience. Bernard's account is conflicted; it both exudes the wonder of confronting the golden *imago* and subverts it by defining it as 'appearing to see' and 'appearing to respond'. And at the same time, he is struck by the awesome wonder of the image to see and respond. Essence and appearance are juxtaposed. According to Bernard, the *imago* is successful at simulating living presence, giving the effect of seeing and speaking, but in fact it is inert, made of dead matter. But somehow the appearance seduces and overwhelms by its multimodal capacities.

The tension issuing from a desire to control with words an aesthetic experience that exceeds language is also evident in the way this encounter with St Gerald's golden image, although chronologically first for Bernard, is placed much later in the text, assigned to Chapter 13, as if some of its magnetic power can be expurgated by delaying the narration. Bernard uses another device to diminish further the magnetic power of this first encounter with the charismatic golden image. Two figures share the name Gerald: the wicked priest in Chapter 1 and the saint in Chapter 13. The echoing name, reverberating in such contrasting ways, destabilizes the epiphanic appearance of the golden statue of the saint, subtly sustaining the residual doubt of the writer.

Liber miraculorum starts in Chapter 1 with Sainte Foy appearing in the dream vision before the blind Guibert.[44] This approach has been rightly interpreted as the privileging of internal vision over physical sight.[45] But should we read this compelling ekphrasis just as a spiritual epiphany of the saint, or should we approach it as Bernard's veiled description of the golden statue? After all, Guibert was not born blind; he had first visited the statue of Ste Foy before the wicked priest Gerald extracted his eyes. Thus, the vision of the golden *imago* had already been imprinted in Guibert's memory before he lost his eyes and saw her again in a dream. This epiphany is described as follows:

> Her appearance was angelic and quite serene, and her countenance was dazzlingly *silver-shining*, besprinkled drop by drop with rosy blush. The lively expression of her wondrous face exceeded all human charm […]. Her clothing was very flowing and interwoven with the most elegant gold

43   Howlett, *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, xiv, 2824.
44   *LM* i. 1, pp. 80–81.
45   Fricke, *Fallen Idols, Risen Saints*, pp. 156–61.

throughout, where delicate *polymorphous designs were set in circles*. Her long sleeves, which hung down to her feet, had been delicately gathered into very tiny pleats, *notwithstanding* their fullness. *And the band around the head, elaborated on the crown with two [crossing] strips, gleams with the translucent radiance of pearls.*[46]

Bernard suppresses the aesthetic act of being in the presence of the statue by insisting that this is an encounter with Ste Foy herself in a dream vision. Yet everything in this ekphrasis relates to the material flux of the statue. And as mentioned above, Guibert had already seen her golden image before he lost his sight; hence his vision is mediated through the artefact. The words are carefully chosen. The face appears silver-shining, *candidus*, evocative of the metal with highest reflectivity coefficient.[47] Its encrustation with drops of rosiness conjures vivacity and liveliness. The description proceeds with the clothing, which is ample and suffused with energy that issues from the golden file and the changeability of the designs set in circles. The garments thus produce *varietas* or diverse appearances. The long sleeves extend to the ground in a myriad of tiny pleats, defying the weight of the ample cloth. These folds capture light, producing shimmering luminosity (*candor*). The last element — the crown — is shaped at the top with two crossing bands, and it too produces sparkling appearances.

Despite Bernard's desire to present this encounter with the saint as an oneiric one, deep down it is still mediated through the memory of Guibert's first encounter with the statue before he became blind. The reason I stress the importance of the statue as mediating the vision is because the tendency has been to privilege the imaginary over the encounter with the physical *imago*. Fricke writes that the viewer sees a vision of the saint in heaven by means of the imagination stirred by the act of gazing at the statue.[48] And this is a line of thinking sustained by the *Liber miraculorum*. But I would like to suggest that the temporal liveliness of the statue works in excess of the text. Hence I would challenge using *Liber miraculorum* as the definitive source of evidence, for it leads to the privileging of the symbolic over aesthetic experience.

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46 'aspectu angelico atque serenissimo, facie candida, roseoque rubore guttatim respersa, que inestimabili vultus vigore omnem humanum superexcellebat decorem [...]. Vestes erant amplissime auroque per totum intexte mundissimo, ac subtili picture varietate circumdate. Manicarum vero quantitas ad vestigia usque dependens in minutissimas rugas per sui magnitudine subtitliter erat contracta. Sed et ligatura capitis in orbem complicata bis binis perspicui candoris embicabat margaritis', *LM* i. 1, pp. 9–10; *Liber miraculorum Sancte Fidis*, ed. by Robertini, pp. 80–81; *The Book of Ste Foy*, trans. by Sheingorn, p. 46. I have indicated my emendations of this translation in italics. The passage is also analysed in Fricke, *Fallen Idols, Risen Saints*, pp. 154–56.

47 The high reflectivity coefficient of silver is the reason why it is used as a layer in modern mirrors: see Thorlabs, 'Protected Silver Mirrors'.

48 Fricke, *Fallen Idols, Risen Saints*, pp. 148–50, 153.

It is the material flux that makes perceptible the metaphysical in the ephemerality of changing appearances.[49] Rather than a flight of imagination and transcendence, the material flux sustains attention to the surface and the recognition of grace/charis in the temporal vibrancy of matter. Bernard admits that the golden sparkle of the dress and face marks the presence of divine wisdom. Wisdom is a concept that expresses the incarnation of Spirit in matter. Just as the saint is 'filled with the Holy Spirit' or *afflata spiritu* (LM i. 1), inspirited by the Holy Spirit, so her golden *imago* attests the presence of her *virtus* in its vibrant material flux. The golden glitter makes visible the trace of Spirit in matter:

> However, the property [befitting] gold (or 'the property of the face') in which her appearance emerges to visibility or the marvelous garment, as far as divine dispensation allowed him [Guibert] to discern them [the gold/face and garment], is not without purpose so prominent, for I believe, they [golden face and garment] carry a reciprocal token, if indeed clothing surpassing [in quality] can be an indicator of character, which we can regard as some armour and protection of some exceeding faith, whose golden flame envisions openly the spiritual radiance of grace.[50]

The main concept expressed here is that the outer appearance of the saint — her face and garments — is resplendent, and this radiance is a manifestation of her invisible spiritual grace. Shining reveals the temporal manifestation of the metaphysical in the material. Previous interpretation of this passage has argued that the perceptual — radiance — is here transformed into a symbolic value: grace.[51] But I see the opposite, the appraisal of the perceptual for its capacity to capture in time what is otherwise ungraspable, invisible, infinite, and beyond time — *virtus* or Spirit. This internal energy becomes inscribed in the sensorial through the fleeting phenomenon of glitter and radiance.

The passage gives an indication of the duality of visual and sonic modes. The ambiguous word *oris* at the beginning can be the genitive singular from *os* meaning 'mouth', 'face', but it could also be the dative or ablative plural form of the vulgate Latin *orum*, 'gold'. The confusion between 'mouth/face' and 'gold' compels the reader to recognize how the *imago* speaks both through its metallic surfaces and through its golden mouth/face/mask. Shining metal

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49 Without recourse to phenomenology or recognition of temporality, Fricke sees the presence of the metaphysical in the sheen of gold. But she insists on an immediate symbolic transformation of the sensual experience, Fricke, *Fallen Idols, Risen Saints*, pp. 176, 178, 180.

50 'Oris autem qualitas, quatum fas fuit huic, cui hec visio apparuit, discernere, sive mirabilis habitus, non ut reor, sine cause extiterunt, nam preclarum, in se hec eadem gerunt portentum, siquidem vestes mensuram persone excedentes, armaturam sive protectionem exuberantis fidei possimus accipere, quarum aureus fulgor spritualis gratiae illuminationem aperte figurat', *LM* i. 1, p. 10; *Liber miraculorum Sancte Fidis*, ed. by Robertini, p. 81; and an alternative English translation in *The Book of Ste Foy*, trans. by Sheingorn, p. 46.

51 Fricke, *Fallen Idols, Risen Saints*, pp. 178, 180; Foletti, 'Meeting Saint Faith', p. 312.

is thus endowed with an aural dimension. The ambiguity between 'gold' and 'mouth' enables the merging of visual and aural modes.[52] In fact, the shining or *aura*, not surprisingly, the word derives from *aurum* 'gold', denotes a synaesthetic pairing of the sonic and optical.[53] *Oris* as 'pertaining to gold' brings to the sensual the capacity of the saint to interact with the faithful through the golden surface of her *imago*. The golden mirroring surface shows through its radiance the in-dwelling of divine grace. The passage establishes another set of associations, which link gold with dress, armour, and fire. It thus expresses how in-spirited matter performs a paradoxical metamorphosis. The gold as mouth and countenance in whose surface the face emerges to visibility and the verb *figurare* at the end of the passage beautifully interweave a tension between the fleeting phenomena of surface reflections and the physical, visceral moulding of matter. The passage further demonstrates how medieval materiality has a spiritual dimension; it uses matter as a medium of the metaphysical, inscribing grace as phenomenal glitter in the sensorial.

While most of our engagement with the medieval icon and *imago* has been mediated through texts, this essay with its documentation of the temporal liveliness of the image in the form of photographs and video demonstrates the importance of understanding medieval art as multimedia installation. The glitter and shadow passing across the surface of the golden statue produce ensoulment. This animation is temporal and non-essential (superficial), but it shows how this performative/methexic aspect allows the *imago* to expand into real time and space. And it is this methexis that shows the affinity between medieval and contemporary multimedia installation art.

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52   While Fricke mentions this ambiguity of face and mouth expressed through the word *os*, she treats it as a manifestation of the highly literary and discursive qualities of Bernard's narrative. Fricke, *Fallen Idols, Risen Saints*, p. 156. By contrast I see in this ekphrasis how the sensory excess produced by the epiphanic disrupts the logic of the text.

53   Mount Sinai is the perfect example of the auratic sight and sound of Moses's encounter with God as divine light and thundering voice, Pentcheva, 'The Aesthetics of Landscape and Icon at Sinai'. This auratic multimodal state resonates with Erica Fischer-Lichte's concept of the state 'in-between' induced by religious ritual, Fischer-Lichte, 'Aesthetische Erfahrung als Schwellenerfahrung'.

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SILKE TAMMEN[†]

Radiance and Image on the Breast

Seeing Medieval Jewellery

Prologue — Painted Radiance

A Visitation panel by Domenico Ghirlandaio, completed in 1491 as a commission from Lorenzo Tornabuoni, shows Mary with a conspicuous clasp that captures the gaze of Elizabeth as well as that of the viewer (Figure 6.1).[1] Elizabeth has sunk to her knees before Mary and touches her softly at stomach height, just below her right arm; Mary, who is slightly inclined towards Elizabeth, has placed her hands on the other woman's shoulders. Apart from the two flanking figures, Mary Cleophas and Mary Salome, the encounter between Mary and Elizabeth depicted here references the Gospel of Luke 1. 39–45:

> And Mary rising up in those days, went into the hill country with haste into a city of Juda. And she entered into the house of Zachary, and saluted Elizabeth. And it came to pass that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost. And she cried out with a loud voice, and said: Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed art thou that hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord.[2]

While representations of the Visitation in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries north of the alps made visible the miraculous events — only felt by the women as a movement in the womb and revealed internally to the

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1 For a critical reading of the present contribution my heartfelt thanks go to Kristin Böse, Romina Ebenhöch, and Saskia Hennig von Lange. Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own.

2 English translation taken from the Douay-Rheims version, with Bishop Challoner's notes, New York, 1914.

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FigURE 6.1. Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Visitation*, 1491.
Paris, Louvre, INV 297. 172 x 165 cm, oil on wood.

'eyes of the spirit' — by including window-like or almond-shaped openings
in the bellies of the pregnant Mary and Elizabeth, or by images of the unborn
children floating before the women's gowns,[3] Italian painters abstained from
such 'pictorial revelations' and represented a simple embrace.[4]

Ghirlandaio chooses a much more original staging of the scene by having
Elizabeth, who has sunk to her knees, touch the body of Mary in the moment
that she comprehends its holiness. Her gaze is not focused on the belly of the
other woman, and her mouth is not opened in prophetic speech as described by
Luke; rather she stares as if spellbound at the large clasp that closes the cloak on
Mary's breast. The pearl-lined golden clasp has a red, convex oval gemstone — a

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3   Tammen, 'Marianischer und "natürlicher" Uterus'.
4   Vincke, *Die Heimsuchung*.

ruby, perhaps — at its centre, in which the light is reflected. At first glance we might take the clasp for one of those pearl-studded jewels that, according to Adrian Randolph, were much esteemed among Florentine women at the time and were worn only at weddings,[5] thus suggesting that Ghirlandaio is engaging in a game of *paragone* with the art of the goldsmith.[6] However, that is not all we can say about the function of the clasp in the image: In a miraculous situation, which in its essence negates the physical act of viewing, Elizabeth intently contemplates a non-figurative coloured surface, onto which we might project a number of things in the sense of a *Leerstelle* in reception theory. The beautiful jewel and its gemstone might be understood as symbols for the virginal and unblemished beauty of Mary's body, which in Latin and vernacular hymns and poetry was compared to a crystal among other things.[7] Perhaps Elizabeth senses in the red of the stone the end of the beginning of the story of Christ's incarnation, the Passion, to which Mary Cleophas and Mary Salome will bear witness. And finally red might also be associated with blood and skin, and thus with the interior of the two women's bodies. There are resonances of this concealment, which is paradoxically projected onto the material surfaces, in the suggestively puffed-up red gown of Mary Cleophas to the left and in the pearl-lined shell frieze with its concave hollows in the background.

However we might want to semanticize the clasp, the spellbound gaze of Elizabeth on the jewel offers the beholder a movement of the gaze according to the topos of *per visibilia ad invisibilia*. The gaze is reflected back to Elizabeth by the shining surface of the jewel, and she (and thus the beholder) are instructed to seek the secret behind the physical and mediating surfaces. Theological reflection is bundled in a painted jewel like light in a concave mirror.[8] While not wanting to suggest an easy commensurability between real and painted jewels, the following is inspired by the gaze of Elizabeth resting on the radiant surface of Mary's clasp.

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5   Randolph, 'Performing the Bridal Body'.

6   For an overview of jewellery in painting, see Autin, *Le Bijou dans la peinture*. Freedman, 'The Madonna's Brooch' has examined Verrocchio's Mary figures, who wear clasps. In her view clasps adorned with gems and pearls in the iconography of Mary were at the time 'taken for granted and so were its symbolic meanings, which we need not discuss here' (p. 145). However this aspect does seem worth discussing to me, especially since to my knowledge there is no extant cultural history of jewellery for the fifteenth century. Only the painted clasps coming out of Verrocchio's workshop were represented with these extravagant highlights. Thus Freedman suspects them to be a signature-like form of branding intended to allude to the associations of a (true) eye and an oil press contained in the name of the artist. Via the allusion to oil paints the latter would in turn create an association to the Flemish artists renowned in Italy for their brilliant surfaces. We can of course exclude such a play on names as a motive for Ghirlandaio, who probably worked in Verrocchio's workshop.

7   Fritsch-Staar, '*Uterus virgineus thronus est eburneus*'.

8   Towards the end of the fifteenth century painted jewellery plays a role in a different devotional context, namely in books of hours from Ghent and Bruges. See Challis, 'Marginalized Jewels', on the decoration of certain pages and prayers with painted pearls, pendants, and paternoster rosaries.

Cope Morses

In contrast to Ghirlandaio, whose painted clasp was precisely about a non-figurative attraction of the gaze, the following will concentrate on clasps bearing figural decoration, and therefore on objects that adorn and illustrate the body of the wearer in a particular place, namely the breast. I would like to explore the connection between the gaze, the jewel, and its imagery exemplarily through close examination of two Italian morses (cope clasps) from the first half of the fourteenth century, which while employing very different designs and approaches both show St Francis receiving the stigmata (Figure 6.2, Plate IV). Of course these may be considered a special case, in that the rare subject of their image is an extreme act of seeing. Attaching them would not only identify their wearer as a Franciscan or lay follower of the order and its saint, but also draw direct attention to the heart lying within the breast, which was perceived as the seat of emotions and memory, as a space of introspection and the experience of intimacy,[9] as well as a place for internal inscription and imaging,[10] particularly in the context of a commemorative and imitative faith in the Passion. Apart from the visually obvious — the illustrated jewellery worn on the breast — there is an interest here in an interior space of images that is only indicated by the clasp, and which is inaccessible to the physical act of seeing.

That jewellery might be the subject of such an examination was long considered unimaginable under the persisting influence of the traditional hierarchy of genres, in which jewellery is accorded only a low status as artisanal craft and is discussed mainly from the perspectives of style or social history.[11] The effect of jewels at first glance is due to their precious materiality; they signal affiliation with an elevated social class and enforce the aura associated with nobility or high ecclesiastical office. The objects' structures and their image programmes receive less critical attention. Only recently has the example of reliquary pendants and *Agnus Dei* capsules, popular among the late medieval aristocracy and clergy, led to a recognition of their potential as media of devotional experience and thus of a concentrated and 'intimate' gaze.[12] In the end, however, it remains an open question whether religious

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9   Jager, *The Book of the Heart*; Webb, *The Medieval Heart*; von Moos, 'Herzensgeheimnisse (occulta cordis)'; Bauer, *Claustrum animae*; Ohly, 'Cor amantis non angustum'.

10 See below and note 37.

11 Lightbown, *Medieval European Jewellery*; Campbell, *Medieval Jewellery in Europe*, ch. 3 'Cultural Contexts', pp. 80–105; a brief overview of the research is found in Cherry, 'Medieval Jewellery'.

12 Murray Jones and Olson, 'Middleham Jewel'; Simone Husemann, whose work focuses on *Agnus Dei* capsules, perhaps generalizes the devotional function of small-scale visual media in a too idealized way: 'His small format demanded from the viewer immediate close vision and undivided attention. It was intended solely for the intimate conversation of the individual with God. Paternoster, pilgrim badges and various forms of pendants both costly and less valuable, held for the beholder a rich potential for the furthering of *anedâht* that

jewels were only '*signs* of piety as well as status and wealth'[13] — as Maureen Kupstas formulates it with regard to reliquary pendants — and therefore ostentatiously evoked a devotional attitude on the surface of body and dress, or whether they were actually used as instruments of introspection.

Similar questions arise with regard to morses, which are usually considered as media of ecclesiastical representation and as aids to secure the memory of their donors.[14] In medieval written sources terms for cloak clasps include *fibula, monile, morsus, firmale, firmarium*, or *pectorale*, of which *morse* is the most widely used in English for ecclesiastical dress. They are mentioned in church treasury inventories as early as the eleventh century. The conspicuous clasps made from noble metals (rarely also relief embroidery) with repoussage and enamel work, set with pearls and gems, can have a diameter of up to nineteen centimetres. Their images mainly show saints, and more rarely scenes from the life of Christ or Mary, with one significant exception: the Annunciation.[15] Andrea Tunger, author of the only catalogue to date on medieval morses, emphasizes their practical function. They were usually attached to a base that held the cope (Latin: *pluviale*) together on the breast: 'As a heavy robe of splendour the cope could no longer be held together with a simple clasp. Also the broad, heavy ornamental plate on the back required the balance of a counterweight in front, to ensure the cope did not slide backwards. The heavy morses fulfilled these technical exigencies. This technical function of ornamental morses is frequently not emphasized enough'.[16] Tunger therefore refrains from assignations of meaning, with one significant exception: the most common recorded imagery on morses, the Annunciation, is explained by Tunger not just with reference to Mary's role as intercessor and church patroness, but also by

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derived not just from the themes depicted but also from the *complex structure of the entire object* [my emphasis], including the material used and its functional purpose.' Husemann, 'Pretiosen persönlicher Andacht', p. 54. See also Robinson, 'From Altar to Amulet'; Tammen, 'Bild und Heil am Körper'. A discussion of the different qualities of viewing as 'gazing' (concentrated, devotional) and 'glancing' (unfocused, filled with fear of God), is found in Hahn, 'Visio Dei'.

13 Kupstas, 'Prologue: Late Medieval Jewelry', p. 30; emphasis mine.

14 'It is attested in numerous entries in treasury inventories in English and German dioceses that in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries canons and other prebendaries at the start of their office, i.e. at their formal investiture, had a more or less richly embroidered cope or vesper mantle made from their own means, which they usually wore at the various ecclesiastical feasts. After the death of the respective owner the cope passed to the church's possession. This explains why such a large number of *cappae professionis* are found in wealthy collegiate churches or cathedrals in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In the medieval treasury inventories they retained the names of their former or current owners.' Bock, *Geschichte der liturgischen Gewänder*, pp. 309–10. The same holds for the morses originating at the same time as the robes or donated at a later date. *Goldene Pracht*, p. 407; see also Braun, *Die liturgischen Paramente*, p. 123; Braun, *Die liturgische Gewandung*, pp. 321–26 (mentions mainly preserved German and Belgian examples); Tunger, 'Typologie und Ikonographie der Pluvialschließen'.

15 Tunger, 'Typologie und Ikonographie der Pluvialschließen', p. 45.

16 Tunger, 'Typologie und Ikonographie der Pluvialschließen', p. 20.

invoking her theological significance as 'gate of heaven' and 'locked gate of the temple'. Tunger elaborates: 'Since the morses, too, possess a double character of opening and closing, we can identify connections between the iconography and function of morses with regard to the representation of the Annunciation. This is particularly evident where the scene of the Annunciation is depicted on two halves of a split clasp, with one side representing the angel and the other Mary. Here the wearing and fastening of the cope give the scene its full meaning'.[17] We might also put it the other way around: that the Annunciation as scene of an encounter illustrates the practical function of the clasps, to bring together the cloak on the breast. The Annunciation transforms Mary into the Mother of God, and putting on the cope also transforms its wearer into a supra-personal body and a bearer of images.[18] The scene of St Francis receiving the stigmata represented on morses illuminates the relationship between the garment, the image, the body of the wearer, and the gaze even more intensively, as I hope to show below.

Two Italian Morses with Scenes of the Stigmatization

The first of the two clasps that interest me here is presumed to originate in Tuscany around 1320 (Figure 6.2).[19] An octofoil, it measures about 10.8 centimetres in diameter and is 0.9 cm deep. Intensive reds, blues, and earthy hues glow on gilded copper. In many places occasional flashes of the gold from below the paint bestow radiance on the mountain of La Verna, a small chapel, the faces of the angel and the saint, as well as the aureole surrounding the seraph. Francis is kneeling, with his arms stretched upwards and away from his body, while the seraph with the countenance of Christ floats to his right before a star-filled night sky with a crescent moon.[20] The iconography

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17   Tunger, 'Typologie und Ikonographie der Pluvialschließen', p. 46. Such a two-part morse (enamel on gilded copper) that probably originated in Paris around 1325 is at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore (acq. no. 44.115), a second almost identical example in the collection of the Musée de Cluny, Paris (acq. no. Cl. 3293), and another said to be from thirteenth-century Limoges is in Dijon at the Musée des beaux-arts (acq. no. CA T 1260).

18   As an example of the large number of publications on illustrated ecclesiastical vestments, see the recent paper by Eggert, 'Exegese, Memoria, Projektionsfläche'.

19   See also *Medieval Art from Private Collections*, cat. no. 167; Tunger, 'Typologie und Ikonographie der Pluvialschließen', cat. no. 110, pp. 301–02. 'The combination of translucent and opaque enamel on gilded copper is unusual. The colouring of the enamel (dark red and blue with black) differs from the colouring of Siennese enamel work' (p. 302); Leone de Castris, 'Sullo smalto fiorentino', p. 52 dates it as follows: 'siamo forse non lungi dal 1320–25' and emphasizes its technical exceptionalism, which she sees in a combined application of opaque and the new translucent enamel that was experimented with by Sienese goldsmiths at the time and is used here at the edges of the piece where it creates blue, reddish violet, green and brown shades (p. 50).

20   The expressive staging of the scene reminded Carmen Gòmez-Moreno more of painting than enamel work: 'In all, the scene is conceived as a painting, not as an enamel'; see

FIGURE 6.2. 'Cope Morse', *c.* 1320. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, acc. no. 1979.498.2. Gilded copper with translucent and champlevé enamel. 10.8 x 10.9 x 0.9 cm. Gift of Georges and Edna Seligmann, in memory of his father, the art collector Simon Seligmann, and his brother, René, 1979. Public domain, CC0 1.0 Universal (CC0 1.0), <http://www.metmuseum.org>.

is reminiscent of Giotto's Louvre-Pala (*c.* 1300), in that both representations omit the figure of Brother Leo, who according to legend accompanied Francis on his forty-day fast at La Verna, and because the seraph here does not appear unambiguously as the Crucified with the cross (as for example in Giotto's fresco in the Bardi chapel of Santa Croce in Florence, *c.* 1320–25). The angel stretches his arms far above his head, which adds to the impact of the lines of power connecting him to Francis's body. To the right stands a chapel, separated from Francis by a chasm crossed by a narrow bridge.

The second morse, probably dating to mid-fourteenth-century Siena, is somewhat larger at 12.9 cm diameter and 4 cm depth; it also appears more magnificent and more mysterious (Plate IV).[21] It is also made from gilded copper, but is adorned with a rock crystal cabochon set in a ring studded with glass gems. The central circle is surrounded by partially obscured half circles and smaller triangular leaves, in which half-figure saints appear before a colourful enamel backdrop. At the cusp of the morse, Christ stands with his hand raised in blessing; to his right is a beardless figure that Tunger identifies as Mary.[22] There follow a holy bishop (a Franciscan, based on the spun cord?), at the very bottom a bearded saint with a cross in his right hand

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Gòmez-Moreno, 'Notable Acquisitions 1979–1980'. The comment seems to be influenced by outdated conceptions of genre hierarchies, in which enamel work was apparently not considered capable of originality of composition or figurative dynamism.

21 Tunger, 'Typologie und Ikonographie der Pluvialschließen', cat. no. 108, pp. 297–98.

22 Identification of the saints following Tunger, 'Typologie und Ikonographie der Pluvialschließen', p. 298.

(John the Baptist?), a saint with a martyr's palm, and finally — to the left of Christ — probably St Paul holding a book. In the triangular leaves rosettes and an unidentified coat of arms appear in turn. The radiant materiality of the enamel, the glass gems, and the crystal strongly contrast with the seemingly faded, earth-coloured drawing on a crumpled parchment, whose brownish ground possibly shows tiny particles of rubbed-off gilding. Francis appears in the usual pose of receiving the stigmata, turning towards the angel whose head floats enigmatically like a celestial body to the upper right. (We might ask whether the drawing could have been removed from a different context, trimmed and clumsily folded for inclusion in the morse.) From the perspective of the framing saints, one looks down on the event as if from heaven; through the crystal the event depicted appears like a close-up in a concave mirror, but slightly distorted.[23] This effect heightens the attention of the beholder and simultaneously creates distance, identifying the event in the crystal as miraculous for the beholder while also earthly and temporally remote from the viewpoint of the saints.

Among the corpus of objects catalogued by Andrea Tunger, the multifoil morse, sealed with a rock crystal, is unique; formally it resembles the *Scheibenreliquiare* typically produced in the Maas region of Germany from the mid-twelfth to the mid-thirteenth century.[24] We might also associate it with the fifteenth-century round or foiled reliquary pendants with a central rock crystal loculus. Some of them share the morse's characteristic of securing a parchment underneath the rock crystal, as Husemann states: 'Small-scale miniatures captured behind glass or rock crystal sometimes occupy the front oculus. A reliquary capsule from the middle of the century kept in the Leipzig Museum of Applied Arts features a painted countenance of Christ behind a rock crystal on the front'.[25] The exclusive materiality of the rock crystal stands in stark contrast to the parchment drawing and was frequently intended to induce a sensual experience of holiness in reliquaries.[26] The morse therefore stages the image of the Stigmatization like a 'relic' under its rock

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23   On this effect, see Gimpel, *The Medieval Machine*, pp. 185–86; Husemann, *Pretiosen persönlicher Andacht*, p. 21.

24   These objects, which since the nineteenth century have also been called phylacteries, have a median diameter of 20 to 30 cm, a central medallion or square framed by half circles, and could be displayed in various ways — above an altar, around the neck of a priest, or mounted on a pedestal. These capsules were still produced in the late Middle Ages. Braun, *Die Reliquiare des christlichen Kultes*, pp. 23–27, 295–300; Kahsnitz, 'Sieben halbrunde Emails in Nürnberg, London und Trier'; Zchomelidse, 'Deus – Homo – Imago', pp. 122–26.

25   Husemann, *Pretiosen persönlicher Andacht*, pp. 21 and 203–04. The mixture of materials (enamel, painting on parchment, and rock crystal) that might seem irritating to today's aesthetic sensibilities was not that unusual in medieval treasury art, for example on portable altars. See Henze, 'Edelsteinallegorese', p. 438.

26   According to Augustine the rock crystal signifies the transformation of badness to goodness; in Hieronymus and Gregory the Great it is a 'metaphor for purity and freedom from sin' and is representative of Christ. Henze, 'Edelsteinallegorese', p. 433. See also Toussaint, 'Heiliges Gebein und edler Stein'.

crystal cover. The gaze of the saints framing the scene emphasizes the special status of image and medium, and also identifies the morse empathically as a medium of vision. The exact nature of the relic-like status of the parchment, whether it lies in the subject of the image alone or even indicates contact of the parchment with relics of St Francis (clothing or blood) during an earlier context of use, can no longer be determined.

If we do not want to go as far as accepting a relic-like staging of the parchment, we might attempt to understand its effect as a discrete critique of luxury, literally embedded in the heart of a piece of treasury art, which at least at first glance seems to be incommensurable with the ideal of poverty of the Franciscan Order. If the parchment was already in this faded and chaffed condition when it was enclosed in the morse, it would have stood in conspicuous contrast to the products of *arte minuta* popular in fourteenth-century Italy. These paintings on gilded parchment alluded to works of enamel art. They were decorated with small river pearls and enclosed under rock crystal plates or in crystal objects such as crosses.[27] If one compares both our copper morses with the wealth displayed in other clasps — silver, studded with pearls or cameo, and their enamel with the more nuanced colouring of translucent enamel from the workshops of Siena's goldsmiths — both appear rather modest, particularly the Tuscan example. In the face of our fragmented knowledge about Italian morses it is difficult to pronounce in more detail on their level of sophistication.[28]

Francis himself said nothing on the topic of visual media such as shrines and clerical jewels. He held in high esteem only the liturgical implements of the Eucharist and insisted on the quality of their workmanship.[29] At the general

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27 *Arte minuta* was a specialty of Venetian artists beginning in the second half of the thirteenth century. See Henze, 'Edelsteinallegorese', p. 435. William Cook mentions two reliquary crosses made from rock crystal dated about 1300 where the lower parts are decorated with a double-sided painted miniature depicting a kneeling and praying Francis: Atri (Abruzzo), San Francesco, today Atri, cathedral treasury (Cook, *Images of St Francis of Assisi*, pp. 69–70); the miniature is surrounded by a little wreath of river pearls typical for Venetian work, and Francis's nimbus is set in tiny pearls. Additionally two cross-shaped blossoms of four pearls are placed in the background of the scene, flanking the figure of Francis. The second cross, from San Nicola in Pisa is significantly more simply designed, without the pearl adornments; today at Pisa, Pinacoteca Nazionale. Cook, *Images of St Francis of Assisi*, pp. 171–72.

28 We might compare the opaque enamel morses bearing the scene of the Annunciation mentioned above with an octofoil plaque also showing the Annunciation (Victoria & Albert Museum, London), which might have been made in Siena around 1320–40 and was formerly associated with the workshop of Ugolino di Vieri, but is today attributed to Ugolino de Neri (active around 1317–47). The function of the object, which shimmers like a butterfly of multicoloured translucent enamel, is disputed. While Tunger, 'Typologie und Ikonographie der Pluvialschließen', pp. 234–35, cat. no. 69, thinks it is a morse, the V&A homepage disputes this due to the lack of traces of a fastener on the back of the object. It could, however, have been sewn directly onto a textile crosspiece holding the cope together.

29 In his 'Letter to all the Custodes' he writes that, 'they ought to hold chalices, corporals, ornaments of the altar, and all that pertains to the Sacrifice in a precious design'. Following

council of the order in Paris in 1292, *thuribula, cruces at ampullae* made from gold or silver were proscribed.[30] We still do not know enough about treasury art in Franciscan contexts, but the exemplary research by Louise Bourdua on the Franciscans in the Veneto of the late medieval period attests to an unselfconscious contact with ecclesiastical luxury and suggests that reliquaries of complex design were in regular use.[31] The moderate Conventual Franciscans and therefore the vast majority of brothers not only had access to liturgical vessels and clerical robes via patrons or confraternities, but also disposed of their own money counter to the rules of the order and were therefore able to finance ostentatious copes, and presumably morses to go with them, despite official reservations about the use of silk fabrics.[32] For instance Bartolomeo di Sancto Giorgio, former custos and guardian of St Antonio in Padua and later provincial minister, donated liturgical vestments;[33] an inventory of the church treasury of St Antonio from 1385 mentions multiple copes including two with enamelled and relief figures of St Francis and St Anthony on the orphrey bands.[34]

Egger, 'Sakrales Gerät im Gebrauch des Franziskaner-Ordens', p. 687: 'Die Kelche, die Korporalien, den Altarschmuck und alles, was zum Opfer gehört, sollen sie in kostbarer Ausführung haben'.

30 'Thuribula, cruces et ampullae de argento vel auro amoventur omnino et de cetero calices simplices fiant in opere'. Bihl, 'Statuta generalia', p. 52.

31 Louise Bourdua, 'Aspects of Franciscan Patronage of the Arts in the Veneto in the Later Middle Ages' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Warwick, 1991), published as Bourdua, *The Franciscans and Art Patronage*. Unfortunately the art of goldsmithing is only peripherally investigated by Bourdua. In general we know more about donations by the laity to Franciscans, less about the Franciscans themselves as commissioners. Bourdua, however, assumes that there are large numbers of undocumented cases. On two reliquaries of Francis that show the Stigmatization, probably originating in the Limousin in the thirteenth century (Louvre and Musée de Cluny), see Blume, 'Der Orden und die Bilder', pp. 115–16, cat. nos 44 and 45. In the same catalogue (pp. 241–42, 268–69, cat. nos 17 and 46) there is discussion of a reliquary casket (treasury of San Francesco in Assisi) and an ostensory (Kunstgewerbemuseum Berlin), both from the first half of the fourteenth century, with reverse glass painting ('gold glass') typical for reliquaries in Italian Franciscan and Poor Clare convents. The Stigmatization of Francis also decorates the casket from the treasury of Assisi, which probably contained the dying robe of the saint, in the form of an engraved and gilded glass medallion. The rather simple box was mounted between the end of the thirteenth and the early fourteenth century, while the gold glass medallion was probably made and added to it in the mid-fourteenth century.

32 At the general council of Assisi (1279) it was decided that 'Fratres aurifrigiatos vel sericos pannos non habeant absque licentia et dispensatione Ministri et Definitorum in provinciali capitulo, qui provideant, ut excessus in talibus evitetur'. Bihl, 'Statuta generalia', p. 52.

33 Bourdua, *The Franciscans and Art Patronage*, p. 198.

34 Bock, *Geschichte der liturgischen Gewänder*, p. 314.

The Stigmatization of St Francis:
Contemplating, Attaching, and Wearing

In the act of attaching an illustrated morse, the cleric subordinated his body to an emblem-like image and transformed himself into a secondary supporting medium that was just as involved in the appearance of the image as the clasp itself. When he removed the cope and its morse, image and body were separated and the gaze of the wearer could again fall upon the image. It seems obvious that the morse worn on the breast attached to a cope would be perceived differently to the unworn, in a sense 'passive', morse.

Francis receiving the stigmata is to be understood as a *bildanthropologisches Paradigma* in that the saint was not merely, like every human being, a 'site of images' (Belting) but because his love of Christ 'in eandem imaginem transformavit'.[35] For the presumably Franciscan user, the viewing and wearing of such a scene of 'being transformed into an image' would likely have had a deeper meaning than merely an outward profession of faith in this contested miracle (in the early fourteenth century, there were still occasional outbursts of doubt and polemics against Francis's stigmata).[36] He probably connected the act of looking devoutly at, attaching, and wearing the clasp with the hope of internalizing the saint's love of Christ and quite literally to imprint it on his heart. The acts of viewing and touching the morse can be considered to have reinforced each other.[37]

So far only Peter Murray Jones and Lea T. Olsen have worked on the implications of donning and wearing religious ornament using the example of a reliquary pendant. They describe these actions as 'performative rituals' that remind the owner of the moment and circumstances of the sanctification of the object through insertion of the relic and place him or her into physical contact with its 'various powers'.[38] Even though the morses discussed here lack an actual relic, or rather in the case of the parchment under the rock crystal this remains debatable, the term 'performative ritual' seems to me at least worth considering. It brings to mind that the user of the morse entered into repeated physical contact with image and medium (i.e. the morse) and must have associated this particular image of the Stigmatization, as an experience of impression and being transformed into an image, with his own body. Clasps were placed directly on the garment over the breast with their sharp fasteners, and within this breast sat their target: the beating heart as seat of

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35   'transformed him into his image'; Bonaventura, *Legenda maior* xiii. 5 following Belting, 'Franziskus'.

36   Krüger, *Der frühe Bildkult des Franziskus in Italien*, pp. 47–48.

37   Jung, 'The Tactile and the Visionary'. As Jacqueline E. Jung recently emphasized, medieval art history should pay more attention to the wearing and touching of devotional objects and thus no longer place the haptic below the visual as was usual in traditional hierarchies of sensual perception.

38   Murray Jones and Olson, 'Middleham Jewel', p. 249.

the powers of the soul, of memory, and of the ability to love.[39] The Christian use of images, with its tendency towards repetition and internalization, aimed at the body of the believer on and below his skin, in the name of memory.[40] The Christian primal fear of forgetting the 'good images' — above all the countenance of Christ — led mystics like Henry Suso to tattoo the monogram of Christ onto his breast with a stylus.[41] Fears about memory and its loss also drove thirteenth-century Beguine Beatrice of Nazareth to tie a wooden cross to her breast day and night and to carry a parchment image of the cross attached to her arm. Her anonymous biographer interpreted this external layer of images as a form of mnemonic support. Beatrice wanted to imprint in her heart and memory that which she feared to forget.[42] That this could succeed was 'proved' by images and signs found during autopsies in the hearts of mystics such as Chiara da Montefalco and Margharita di Città Castello.[43] When Chiara da Montefalco was dissected, the *Arma Christi* were visible in the veins of her heart. The heart of Margharita di Città Castello, which was opened after her death in 1320 before the high altar by physicians in the presence of laity and clergy, was found to contain spherical objects that themselves contained images, such as a picture of the crib of Jesus. The idea of the heart as a site of memory overlapped with the equally common devotional notion of a spiritual pregnancy of the believer with Christ in his heart.[44] It is therefore unsurprising that the most popular image for morses was the Annunciation. The wearer of such a picture proclaimed an act that was meant to ideally occur in his hidden interior. The concept of spiritual pregnancy cannot be adapted to an understanding of the image of Francis receiving the stigmata on morses, but it does testify among other things to a medieval sense of expectation regarding the power to impress body and soul that emanated from mental as well as from material images. In an ideal situation of *devotio*,[45] to look closely at the scene of Francis receiving the

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39   Lentes, 'Inneres Auge, äußerer Blick und heilige Schau', especially pp. 182, 187–88; Polo de Beaulieu, 'La Légende du coeur inscrit'.

40   See Tammen, 'Vom Haften der Erinnerung'.

41   See Keller, 'Kolophon im Herzen'. Quast, '*Drücken und schriben*'.

42   Following Hamburger, *Nuns as Artists*, p. 178.

43   See Frugoni, '*Domine, in conspectu tuo omne desiderium meum*'; Park, 'Relics of a Fertile Heart'.

44   See Atkinson, *The Oldest Vocation*; Hale, 'Imitatio Mariae'.

45   The concept of devotion (*Andacht, devotio, anedâht, devocion*) as an emotional state of intensified attachment, dedication, or focus on God or holiness can hardly be defined more concretely. It can take the form of a dialogue, but also of visualization based on memory or emotional approximation in the sense of a mental imitation. The gaze and a concrete image are only two elements of a complex situation to which the medieval practice of piety would ideally add a prayer. Psychosomatic target and focus-point is the heart, which was to be opened, softened, impressed with images and words. See Kalina, '*Cordium penetrativa*', p. 248 on the 1395 tract of an anonymous Augustinian, perhaps from Prague, who elaborately discusses the power of images that wound the heart and stimulate love for saints through the eyes.

stigmata meant to burn with love for the saint and to anchor the example he represents deeper in memory. To wear the image on the breast finally implied a self-designation, a transfer of the Stigmatization onto a derivative and material level.

That clasps were indeed connected to the heart and to love is demonstrated by looking further afield, at contemporary literature. Hugo of Langenstein's lyrical verse poem *Martina* (completed 1293) centres on the passion of this martyr and was intended as refectory reading for the illiterate brothers of the Teutonic Order. In the context of an allegory of dress it mentions a *fürspan* (clasp) that sits above the heart aching with love, signifying the *Gottesminne* of Martina.[46] About 1300 the Dominican nun Heiltraut of Bernhausen from the cloister of Weiler near Esslingen had a vision of John the Evangelist, whom she particularly revered, in the choir. He is described as 'gar schöne und minniklich und was angelegt mit himelvarben Kleydern und het ein güldein Fürspang vorn an seim Hertzen' — comely and dressed in blue with a golden clasp before his heart. The clasp with the engraved words *caritas Dei* refers to the love of God that enflames his heart ('dy sein Hertz als gar entzündet het').[47] Apparently — and this might point towards theological perceptions of morses — the *fürspan* is particularly significant here because it refers to a site on the body and its interior and is therefore a suitable symbol for the love of God. The scene of the Stigmatization tells of such an exceptional case of the love of God. Wearing it on the breast reinforces the bearer's faith in this miracle and connects it to the heart.

It is difficult, however, to further substantiate the ideal scenarios of 'performative ritual', of devotional contemplation and mental imaging, I have described here. According to Josef Braun 'dressing prayers that allegorically interpret the pieces of clothing mentioned (superpelliceum, dalmatic, tunica, cope) […] were not used at all or if so only to a very limited extent'.[48] Compared to the chasuble — which is only worn during Mass, symbolizes the priest's role as Christ's earthly representative, and does not require a clasp — the cope is 'the liturgical outer vestment of priests and bishops during all those ceremonial functions that do not permit the use of the chasuble. Acts of this kind include processions, ceremonial blessings (e.g. the dedication of churches), the consecration of ash, candles, palm leaves, and christening water, ceremonial vespers and *laudes*, funerals and *absolutio* at the catafalque during requiems, the blessing with the monstrance, the distribution of holy water before high mass'.[49] Accordingly, the cope is not blessed, and according to Braun it 'only acquires its mystical interpretation at a late date, and even then only rarely. One of the first to interpret the vestment mystically is Honorius

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46   Hugo von Langenstein, *Martina*, ed. by von Keller, p. 50.
47   Following Wipfler, 'Amicitia in der Kunst des Mittelalters', p. 168.
48   Braun, *Die liturgische Gewandung*, p. 725.
49   Kranemann, 'Pluviale', p. 26. See also Braun, *Die liturgische Gewandung*, pp. 306–58.

[*Gemma animae*], for whom it is the symbol of a holy conduct that urges its wearer towards the same'.[50] If we accept the understanding of the cope as a symbol of a 'holy conduct', morses reinforce and 'illustrate' this in various ways: Christ, Mary, and the saints stand before the breast of the wearer and invite him to follow their example. They guard the wearer's breast like a shield, while also pointing towards an inner attitude.

St Francis: Wearing and Showing

In the moment they were worn, the morses showing the Stigmatization of St Francis were hidden from the direct gaze if not from the awareness of their wearers. They were thus not dialogical partners in the sense of devotional *Andachtsbilder*. Instead, the cleric in his embroidered cope, fastened with a conspicuously large clasp, presented a moving 'image-body' to the eyes of the participants in the religious festivities mentioned above, such as processions. How long and how intensively this 'image-body' was available for its audience to 'read' cannot be precisely determined. Birgitt Borkopp-Restle has argued for 'effect at a distance as constitutive principle' of patterned liturgical silk vestments, while she defines the effect of their embroidery and trimming as dependent on 'extreme close vision', making it unlikely that they would be noticed by lay people in an intense way during mass.[51] We might extend this observation to morses. The contrast between the postulated legibility of vestments and clasps as bearers of emblems, inscriptions, and images and their perception as moving, shimmering, variously modelled surfaces and bodies to which the gaze of the public only attaches with difficulty can be framed with reference to Georges Didi-Huberman's distinction between the *visible* (iconographically legible) and its 'other', the *visual*.[52]

The side of the more diffuse *visual* is where we might place the Sienese morse, particularly, with its rock crystal that at a distance is perceived only as a shimmering surface, largely obscuring the object contained within. Following Anca Vasiliu it then makes sense to interpret the rock crystal as a medium that not only displays itself and carries a symbolic reference to the *corpus spiritale* of a saint, but in which the reflection of heavenly light and the human gaze may meet — thus enabling a 'different' or 'other' vision in this zone.[53] If, however, we assume with good reason — the morses are rather large — that there were plenty of viewers able to identify the scene of St Francis receiving the stigmata, we arrive at an inherent and considerable potential for irritation that goes beyond the status of the morses as luxury items (and likely only

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50   Braun, *Die liturgischen Paramente*, p. 127. 'That it is open at the front signifies that the gate of heaven is open to the servants of Christ as a reward for their holy conduct'.

51   Borkopp-Restle, 'Materialität und Handwerk in der Textilkunst des Mittelalters'.

52   For these concepts, see Didi-Huberman, *Confronting Images*, ch. 1.

53   Vasiliu, 'Le Mot et le verre'.

FIGURE 6.3. Giotto di Bondone, *Saint Francis Cycle: Renunciation of Worldly Goods*, Assisi, San Francesco, *c.* 1295–1300. Wikimedia Commons, <https://commons. wikimedia.org/wiki/ File:Giotto_-_Legend_ of_St_Francis_-_-05-_-_ Renunciation_of_ Wordly_Goods.jpg>.

the spirituals would have been disturbed by the latter). The irritation I am alluding to goes deeper and beyond the material surface of the clasps, for in precisely the place where the morse holds the cope together, it paradoxically reveals the insurmountable rift between Francis the early thirteenth-century saint, and the current bishop or canon. Francis, who 'nakedly followed the naked Christ', who at the beginning of his conversion severed ties to his father and was taken 'under the mantle' of a bishop (Figure 6.3), and who tried to hide the stigmata during his lifetime, is the vivid counter-image to the cope that is fastened around the body of its wearer by the very morse that visually proclaims Francis's miracle. And if it is the 'opened' (that is, stigmatized) body of St Francis that 'creates salvation',[54] then the morse unwittingly works against the image represented on it, for it closes a garment on the chest. The spike that pins it in place renders the morse a veritable 'thorn in the flesh' of the ecclesiastical culture of images, whose representational dynamics of

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54 Lentes, 'Nur der geöffnete Körper schafft Heil'.

concealment and revelation are motivated quite differently from those of its humble saints and visionaries.

Georg Simmel described (ideally shiny) jewellery as a form of projection, a 'radiance emanating from a person, documenting the fact that human beings do not cease with the geometrical limits of their body'.[55] The morses achieve this, but they go much further: they appear to function as 'switchboards' for very different acts of seeing. Apart from the outward effect mentioned by Simmel — radiance achieved by way of colour and materiality that assumes a rather passive or enthralled form of viewing — they offer a complementary but also diametrically opposed effect, one that diverts the gaze from the surface of the image (the Stigmatization) and its medium (the clasp) towards the interior of the heart, thus stimulating the beholder's powers of imagination. Their small scale and intricate imagery seem to favour this concentration of the gaze. However, the ways in which small scale was experienced by medieval viewers, variously motivated by devotion and/or by aesthetic pleasure that focused on the subtleties of the act of perception, requires further research.[56]

Translated from German into English by Kate Whitebread.

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55   Simmel, 'Psychologie des Schmucks', p. 455. For an English version of the argument, see Simmel, 'Adornment'.

56   On the cross-cultural fascination of the miniature, see Mack, *The Art of Small Things*. On seals and their occasionally intricate imagery, see Späth, 'Mikroarchitektur und korporative Identität'.

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CYNTHIA HAHN

Reliquaries and the Boundaries of Vision

Relics, Crystals, Mirrors, and the 'Vision Effect'

Rather than discuss physical vision, this essay will consider some of the cultural and intellectual circumstances or boundaries of vision and their consequences for medieval viewers. We will ask, How did one see? Specifically, under what sort of constraints did one see a relic? Beginning with the micro in order to effectively move to the macro, I hope to understand the viewer's more intimate relationship to the relic and reliquary before expanding to a discussion of the relic's place in cult and/or space, and indeed its location in a cosmic setting. As accessories to vision that are understood in a very specific fashion in the Middle Ages, I will discuss crystals and mirrors and the position of the viewing body. I take as my primary field of consideration the period that marks the beginning of the scholastic study of sight — the twelfth and thirteenth centuries — and, for a key part of my material, even look much earlier.

Vision and the Position of the Viewer

Already in the early Christian period, the physical relationship of the viewer to the object was considered a subject worthy of discussion. Quite apart from the eye's reception of the material 'species' from the object present before it, problems of distance, angle, and the nature of vision were at issue in the operation of corporeal sight.[1] Joseph Kockelmans argues that Augustine 'maintained that an experience with a work of art will not occur if the beholder

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1 Lindberg, *Theories of Vision*; and Clark, 'Optics for Preachers'. For the Christian understanding of vision, see Miles, 'Vision'; Hahn, 'Vision'; and Hahn, 'Visio Dei'. I would note that this essay was delivered in 2010 and completed in 2012. Much has been published since that date that it has not been possible for the author to include. I apologize for any omissions, but would argue that the substance of the argument holds true.

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is not properly related to the "aesthetic object".[2] In discussing the character of the connection between the viewer and nature and the viewer and the work of art, Jeffrey Hamburger argues that 'epistemology and aesthetics came to converge'.[3] That is, in medieval theology and visionary practice from Augustine through Gertrude of Helfta, objects worthy of 'speculation' — a practice deemed indispensable to pursuing an understanding of the divine — required a viewer who surveyed and perceived with the senses. An act of looking of a particular kind was the essential first step of the process of devotion.[4]

A series of questions emerges from these general principles when we turn to the issue of the viewing of relics. First and foremost must be: Can we assume that devotees actually *saw* relics? As often as not, the answer must be no. Relics were customarily hidden in reliquaries and protected from casual vision. Even when rock crystal or glass came into prominent use as early as the Carolingian period and with increasing frequency in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, there is no surety the relic could be seen. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that Christians *looked* at relics. Looking at relics was, indeed, a quintessential part of Christian practice and devotion.

This seeming paradoxical situation — looking, but not seeing, but yet believing to have seen — is not to be understood as the plight of unsophisticated and naïve medieval viewers but, I would argue, is the end effect of a set of calculated conditions of viewing. Rather than dismiss this state of affairs with scepticism, we might more accurately understand and describe the process as some version of Roland Barthes's 'l'effet de réel'. Let us, then, call the relic-viewing experience 'l'effet de vision' — the vision effect — a carefully controlled process that perhaps includes 'useless details', in an attempt to 'void the sign', and simulate the 'pure encounter with an object and its expression',[5] but surely one that is constructed and delimited. In employing this label derived from a literary stratagem, we must nevertheless assert that *physical viewing* is essential to creating the effect.

Thus, rather than clear and unmediated physiological sight, relic-viewing is complicated with questions of space and circumstance, and even more consequentially, with cultural constructions of what it *means to see* and the *value* of sight of various kinds. Even the question of whether vision resides in the body, in the eyes as organs, in the brain, or if it somehow takes up residence in a less concrete space — in the imagination or even the heart[6] — is one of importance to medieval response. Given that my focus centres on reliquaries, I would begin by returning to the question of the importance of aesthetic looking, specifically the circumstances of looking at works of *art*.

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2   Kockelmans, *Heidegger on Art and Art Works*, p. 17.
3   Hamburger, 'Speculations on Speculation', p. 399.
4   Hamburger, 'Speculations on Speculation'.
5   Barthes, 'L'Effet de réel', p. 85 and p. 89. Barthes conceives of this idea as quintessentially modern in contrast to medieval ekphrasis but, nevertheless, the idea serves us here.
6   See Webb, *The Medieval Heart*.

Aesthetics and Sense Perception

Although in the modern world, the significance of the word 'aesthetics' has moved away from its ancient Greek meaning indicating knowledge derived from the senses (from *aisthanesthai* 'to perceive, to feel'), towards connotations of beauty as evaluated by taste, a medieval understanding of the word is close to the ancient and to the concept of 'speculation'.[7]

Medieval discussion of the question vis-à-vis art is unfortunately scant, but nonetheless telling. In the twelfth century John of Salisbury was willing to allow that art encourages the 'mind's genius' through the perception of things. In the thirteenth century, Thomas Aquinas understood that just as the human intellect is 'discursive' so also is the 'aesthetic *visio*', driving a complex, composite act of looking involving knowledge and judgement.[8] Even before Aquinas, Richard of St Victor held that contemplation itself could be aestheticized as 'a state of clear insight and detached admiration at the spectacle of wisdom'.[9]

In his *De Perspectiva* of 1270, the Polish theologian Witelo grounded his comments in the conditions of looking. He emphasized that, in the artistic product, the small has great potential in that it may be 'looked at from close up' showing 'subtle intentions', 'beautiful ordering' of parts, and 'decorum' of line or design. For Witelo the position of the viewer, in terms of both nearness and axis of vision, was essential to the discovery of the beauty of an object.[10] In contrast, Mary Carruthers, in discussing this subject, emphasizes the distance of the viewer.[11]

I would argue that as we think of near and far and shifting points of view and careful study, we must consider the precise and specific relationship of viewer and reliquary. In writing of his precious relic of the True Cross, the fourth-century bishop Paulinus of Nola gives us some insight into what must have been a very intimate relationship. The bishop seems to have been handling a small gold reliquary similar to surviving examples, no larger than a few inches on a side, with a sliding lid that could be opened to reveal the contents of the box.[12] The fragment of the True Cross he gazed upon was one he had purposefully saved out of the relics deposited in the altar, in order to

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7 Hamburger, 'Speculations on Speculation'.

8 Eco, *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*, p. 73. Compare this to Peter of Limoges and the moral aspects of vision discussed below.

9 Richard of St Victor, *Benjamin Major* i, 4, ed. by Migne, col. 67. As cited by Eco, *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas*, p. 51.

10 Eco, *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*, p. 69. Axis of vision is important to Gothic optics because 'species' were received more properly straight on rather than at an angle. See discussion in *Roger Bacon and the Origins of 'Perspectiva'*, ed. and trans. by Lindberg, p. xli, and in mirrors pp. lxxxix–xciv.

11 Carruthers, *The Experience of Beauty in the Middle Ages*, pp. 36–39.

12 See discussion in Hahn, *Strange Beauty*, p. 15.

indulge himself with looking at it in 'times of need'. He describes becoming lost in contemplation of the tiny splinter, calling it the 'invulnerable sign'.[13]

Clearly here, although the object is decidedly physical, its *sight* is more than an instance of neurological perception but instead one of the embrace of faith and the bodily absorption of the holy — a taking in through the eyes. Paulinus's contemporary Ambrose wrote of the relics of Gervase and Protase:

> Our eyes were shut, so long as the bodies of the saints lay hidden. The Lord opened our eyes, and we saw the [saints]. We used not to see them, but yet we had them. And so, as though the Lord had said to us when trembling, 'See what great martyrs I have given you', so we with opened eyes behold the glory of the Lord.[14]

The bodies of Gervase and Protase had been buried out of sight, but their availability to the eyes of the Milanese congregation was not just a matter of elevation or even attention, it was a matter of revelation and readiness. The act of looking with devout attention opens the doors (the eyes) of perception.

The Small

The relationship of viewer to viewed is, as implied above, significantly inflected by size. To return once again to Paulinus, we find he counselled a friend, 'Let not your faith shrink because the eyes of the body behold evidence so small; let it look with the inner eye on the whole power of the cross in this tiny segment'.[15] Once more, two issues are highlighted in this passage: the importance of spiritual seeing or, as Paulinus calls it, the use of the inner eye, and the very small size of the relic that allows an expanded consciousness in response. In creating a structured approach to vision, reliquaries manipulated both of these issues with remarkable success.

The question of size is one that is intrinsic to the viewing of relic fragments. Peter Brown writes eloquently about the meaning of fragmentation in regard to relics:

> how better to express the paradox of the linking of Heaven and Earth than by an effect of 'inverted magnitudes', by which the object around which boundless associations cluster should be tiny and compact?[16]

The very small can be particularly effective in promising that it might 'open itself to reveal a secret life — indeed to reveal a set of actions and hence a

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13 *The Poems of St Paulinus of Nola*, trans. by Walsh, poem 291, pp. 152–54.
14 Letter 22.11. See Ambrose, *Epistolae*, ed. by Migne, cols 1062–69; Ambrose, *Letters*, trans. by de Romestin, de Romestin, and Duckworth, rev. and ed. by Knight.
15 *The Poems of St Paulinus of Nola*, trans. by Walsh, poem 291, pp. 152–54; and *Letters of St Paulinus of Nola*, trans. by Walsh, p. 36.
16 Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, p. 78.

narrativity and history outside the given field of perception', as Susan Stewart observed. In particular, she calls attention to scientific studies that document a 'compressed time of interiority', when one examines a tiny object.[17] Gaston Bachelard links the small to the poetics of space and the concentration of essence,[18] and Richard Etling links it to a willingness to perceive what one might call agency or life: 'the small seems to concentrate a limitless power through its miniaturization and through a natural process of animism whereby we invest matter with spirit'.[19] R. L. Gordon notes that the divine is signalled precisely by the ability to eschew the normally sized and to obliterate the opposition of great and small.[20] Even the biblical parable of the mustard seed draws attention to the power of the minute — the mustard plant is praised for having the smallest seed that yet grows to great size, sheltering the birds of the skies.[21]

In the *Dialogues*, Pope Gregory the Great, like Paulinus, clarifies how such looking might work. He traces the power of the focusing ability of constricted vision arguing that true wonders are seen 'with spiritual vision, purified with acts of faith and abundant prayers', and describes a miracle witnessed by a saint where 'all the powers of his mind unfolded, and he saw the whole world gathered up before his eyes in what appeared to be a single ray of light'.[22]

It might be said that most of these observations about the power of the small (and a focus on studying the small) ultimately revert to issues of constraint and indexicality; small size is important but so is materiality, even if fragmented. Looking establishes a connection, prompting (yet frustrating) a desire to touch and to somehow restore the fragment to completion. The connection forges links between the exterior world and the viewer's 'interior monitor' (perhaps located in the soul and sometimes likened to divine surveillance),[23] promoting what could be called an intense experience of interiority.[24]

Again, it is Peter Brown who argues that the fragment and its associations supersede normal place and time, quoting the fourth-century sermon on relics by Victricius of Rouen, 'Here are bodies where every fragment is "linked by

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17   Stewart, *On Longing*, pp. 54 and 66. Of course this book primarily considers literature rather than art or science.

18   Bachelard, *La Poetique de l'espace*, p. 146. Also now in translation as Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*.

19   Etling, 'Space, Stone, and Spirit', p. 318.

20   Gordon, 'The Real and the Imaginary', p. 14.

21   'Then said he, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.' Luke 13. 18–19. Mentioned in all four Gospels.

22   Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* 4.7, trans. by Zimmerman, p. 201.

23   Denery, *Seeing and Being Seen in the Later Medieval World*, p. 113.

24   For interiority, see Ganz, *Medien der Offenbarung*, chs 9–13; and the review by Jeffrey F. Hamburger in which he problematizes the concept: Hamburger, Review of Ganz, *Medien der Offenbarung*; also Denery, *Seeing and Being Seen in the Later Medieval World*, p. 111.

a bond to the whole stretch of eternity'".[25] In an adjacency of opposites, the materiality of the tiny thing allows the fragment to carry the mind towards the non-material and almost unimaginable spaces of the universal, at the same moment that it pulls thoughts inward. Although God promises to give a morsel to 'fill the mouth' of the faithful (Psalm 81. 10), Richard of St Victor marvels that in order to do so angels must break the 'crystalline beauty' of the celestial bread into bits small enough to be consumed, to be taken in.[26]

A striking and perhaps instructive parallel to this phenomenon of simultaneous condensation and amplification can be found in contemporary art. A photolithograph by the German artist Gerhard Richter pinpoints the appeal but also the difficulty, even the irrational character, of both the notion that the cosmic might be revealed by the minuscule and that one might discover cosmic truth in the deepest recesses of the interior. *Erster Blick in das Innere, 2000* famously reproduces a photograph and caption from a German newspaper that exults in a documentation of the 'first look' at the interior of the atom, the very heart of matter. Unfortunately for lay people who might want to understand the atom, the result is more notable for suggestive blurriness than any sort of clarity. David Morgan has argued that in the image, Richter is revealing the 'sheer presumption of seeing' and that indeed 'one sees literally nothing' so that Richter is able to comment on the truth of vision and to 'lay bare the conviction that the photograph is able to capture the elusive reality of things'.[27] (Although it also must be admitted that scientists had the knowledge and 'means' to 'see' the data in this photograph — just as faith allows one to see a relic.) Significantly, Morgan notes that, at the same moment that the artist casts doubt on the possibilities of physical sight, Richter simultaneously poses a question — 'Does this picture [nonetheless] bring viewers to the mysterious threshold of the structure of existence, of the entire cosmos?'[28] If so, it does so by first resorting for 'insight' into the small, the infinitesimal, even the microscopic.

The suggestive connection between relics and photographs is not one that is inconsequential. Both media are charged with truth value beyond any possible justification of reality. Both carry a powerful indexical significance grounded in materiality. Just as we might think to find the meaning of the universe in the almost miraculous photograph of the interior of an atom, Paulinus sought the divine through contemplating a tiny relic of the True Cross in its exquisite golden capsule. Looking, not at exposed relics, but at the wrappings of a bit of cloth or balm or sap enclosing a minuscule fragment of wood, the bishop discovered 'the whole power of the cross [is] in this tiny

25 Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, p. 78, his translation of Victricius of Rouen, *De laude sanctorum*, 11, ed. by Migne, col. 454B; now available in translation in *Medieval Hagiography*, ed. by Head, pp. 31–52, see pp. 45–46.
26 Richard of St Victor, *Mysticae Adnotationes in Psalmos*, LXXX, ed. by Migne, col. 328C.
27 Morgan, *The Sacred Gaze*, pp. 77–78. For the idea of the 'reality' of photography, also see Barthes, *Camera Lucida*.Barthes, 'L'Effet'.
28 Morgan, *The Sacred Gaze*, pp. 77–78.

segment'.[29] His relic-viewing is ultimately and again, not the vision of the physical eyes, but an insistence on the possibilities of 'looking' itself.

Rock Crystal and Relic-Viewing

One of the most typical observations about later medieval reliquaries is that they *literally* revealed their contents. It is thought that the relic was on view, displayed behind crystal windows. This development is said to occur following exposure to Byzantine or Eastern reliquaries after the sack of Constantinople in 1204, and to be the result of a history of 'increased visibility' of relics (a concept that parallels a grand narrative about increasing accessibility in shrines).[30] Upon examination, such narratives represent an oversimplification and thus a misunderstanding.

I raise two objections. Rock crystal does not make a first appearance on reliquaries in the thirteenth century, nor does it ever serve the role of a passive and transparent 'window'. Already in the Carolingian period, rock crystal is used as a precious material that is both saturated with meaning and presents a certain visual resistance. Perhaps most importantly, rock crystal is often not 'crystal clear'.[31]

Crystal emerges as one of the most desirable materials for use on reliquaries, growing in popularity throughout the Middle Ages, perhaps because of its many alleged almost magical qualities: it is said to glow, it is symbolic of Christ or the Virgin in its purity, and, as above, it designates the celestial regions.[32] Almost all medieval sources follow Pliny in conceiving of crystal as a sort of permanent and miraculous ice; some use the imagery to argue that the grace of God might melt its exceptional hardness to supply life-giving waters. Not surprisingly, therefore, crystal is associated with baptism.[33] The ninth-century abbot Smaragdus makes an explicit connection to Revelation: 'the sea of glass signified baptism, which is said [to be] like crystal by virtue of [its] purity'.[34]

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29 *The Poems of St Paulinus of Nola*, trans. by Walsh, poem 291, pp. 152–54.
30 Belting, *The Image and its Public in the Middle Ages*, Appendix C: 'Western Art after 1204. The Importation of Relics and Icon', pp. 203–22, 264–69; and Diedrichs, *Vom Glauben zum Sehen*.
31 In conversation, Barbara Boehm of the Metropolitan Museum of Art NY noted that a sure-fire means to recognize modern glass replacements for medieval crystals was their too-perfect clarity. See an essay by Ingeborg Krueger for discussion of glass as parallel to rock crystal: Krueger, 'Man-Made Crystal'.
32 Kornbluth, *Engraved Gems of the Carolingian Empire*, p. 17. This subject is discussed extensively in essays by Bissera Pentcheva, Gia Toussaint, Marisa Galvez, and others in Hahn and Shalem, *Seeking Transparency*. Also see Meier, *Gemma Spiritalis*, with extensive commentary on the allegorization of the material, esp. pp. 98, 127 n. 439, 135 n. 472.
33 Kornbluth, *Engraved Gems of the Carolingian Empire*, p. 51, and see Richard of St Victor, *Mysticae Adnotationes in Psalmos*, ed. by Migne, col. 328C. Also see Pentcheva, Brigitte Buettner, and others in Hahn and Shalem, *Seeking Transparency*.
34 Smaragdus, *Collectiones in Epistolas*, ed. by Migne, col. 333, cited and translated in Kornbluth, *Engraved Gems of the Carolingian Empire*, p. 53.
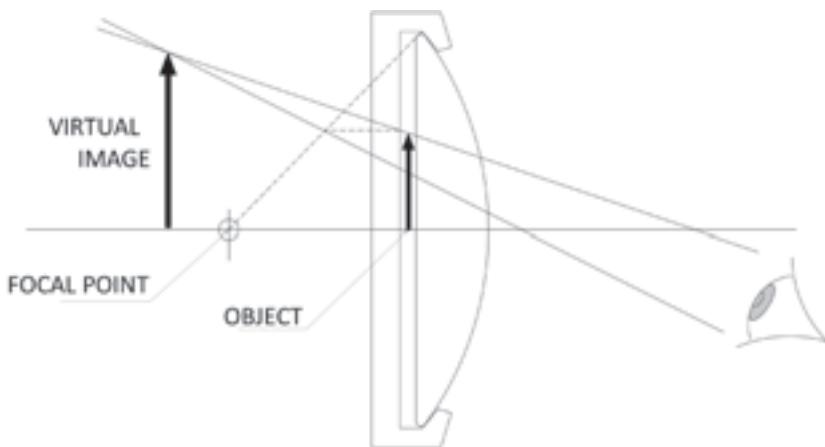
FIGURE 7.1. Diagram: Perceived Image through a Plano-Convex Lens. When the object is located between the eye and the focal point, the image will always be located on the same side of the lens as the object and somewhere further from the lens. If the object is right-side up, then the image will also be right-side up. The image is less distorted than lenses with two curvatures. See: <https://micro.magnet.fsu.edu/optics/lightandcolor/lenses.html>.

Although its exceptional hardness gave it prestige, such hardness also made it difficult to work, and the number of medieval workshops that produced carved rock crystal was limited. Genevra Kornbluth has shown that the Carolingians found new ways to work with the material, perfecting a technique of figural ornamentation with etching and drilling. Artists from Fatimid Egypt used a completely different technique to produce mostly non-figural designs on vessels, perfume bottles, and especially lamps.[35]

The stone was consistently praised for its clarity, and it is thought that the common early Western shape of the gem, the cabochon, was used as a lens to magnify small things: the resultant image is not only larger but seems to hover behind the stone in an indeterminate space (Figure 7.1). Such a use is intriguing and calls for further exploration.[36]

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35 Kornbluth, *Engraved Gems of the Carolingian Empire*, pp. 5–11; Shalem, 'Fountains of Light'. In the thirteenth century, workshops in Paris, Venice, and elsewhere in Europe appeared. Alcouffe, 'Classical, Byzantine and Western Hardstone-Carving', discusses the exchange of artisans. There may have been workshops in Byzantium from the early Byzantine period: Philippe, 'Le Cristal de Roche et la Question Byzantine'. For more recent scholarship, see articles by Stefania Gerevini, E. Morero and others, Marcus Pilz, Avinoam Shalem, and others in Hahn and Shalem, *Seeking Transparency*.

36 Kornbluth, *Engraved Gems of the Carolingian Empire*, p. 20. And Kornbluth, 'Active Optics'. I would note, however, that Meier argues that gemstones are not discussed in the Middle Ages so much in terms of their transparency, excepting rock crystal, where the clarity of the stone in particular signifies purity without sin: Meier, *Gemma Spiritalis*, p. 237.

A Carolingian reliquary, the so-called *Talisman of Charlemagne* (Figure 7.2, *back view of reliquary*), is often cited as an early example in which clear stones were used to expose and magnify relics. We know from inventories that the *Talisman* was originally constructed of two very pale sapphires, not in fact rock crystals. In its present state, the reliquary pendant enables a very clear sight of the relic, as the cabochon on the front magnifies two splinters of the True Cross behind it. However, this does not represent the original disposition of the object.[37]

The pendant has a remarkable history. It is said to have been removed from Charlemagne's grave, from his very neck, by Otto III or Barbarossa, and to have remained in Aachen throughout the Middle Ages. It appeared in Reims, the coronation cathedral of France, via a gift from the family of Josephine who had herself received it from her husband Napoleon Bonaparte.[38] At various

FIGURE 7.2. '*Talisman of Charlemagne*', Reims, Palais du Tau. Photo © Wikimedia Gnu license Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported.

junctures in this complex provenance, it was altered more than once. The original relics were said (as late as 1825) to have been Marian — milk and/or hair — not the present relics of the Cross.[39] There is evidence that gold foil once backed the sapphires, and most importantly, the clearer front 'gem' is now a glass replacement.

Because the relics have been replaced and their presentation changed, it is certain that we should not talk about looking *through* the reliquary as we do today. Furthermore, the original sapphire, that on the back of the gem, is much less amenable to clear vision than is the glass replacement on the front of the piece. Finally, as is not often highlighted, the reliquary takes the form

37   Taralon, 'Le Talisman de Charlemagne'.
38   Braunfels, *Karl der Große*, no. 557, pp. 109–10.
39   Meier, *Gemma Spiritalis*, p. 403, notes that rock crystal is associated with milk production for mothers.

of an ampulla, a shape that recalls early Christian reliquaries and that would have been appropriate as a vessel for a liquid such as milk. Nevertheless, the 'milk' may have taken the form of a fine powder, as customarily collected at the holy site at Bethlehem, and would not have been ideal for exposure in the reliquary.[40] A seventeenth-century engraving from the Aachen treasury shows the gem with a centre that is difficult to interpret: one sees only a central circle or dot.[41] Ultimately, the view through the sapphire on the rear of the *Talisman* as in Figure 7.2 is suggestive in its cloudiness and may more accurately represent the look of the original Carolingian reliquary than does the customary front view of the glass cabochon.

Many other reliquaries have cabochon or hogback crystals (that is, a crystal with a central ridge, see Plate V) that would have provided equally challenging and distorting conditions for viewing. The crystals on the *c.* 1200 *Phylactery* now in the Walters Museum, for example, are not at all 'crystal' clear, and they may or may not originally have protected relics. Another example, the twelfth-century Stavelot portable altar, presents a tantalizing crystal through which one sees, not the relics inside the altar, but a bit of parchment floating just below the surface with words from the liturgical celebration of the Mass: 'Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus' (Holy, Holy, Holy). Perhaps the words intimate the presence of the saints that dwell in the relic cavity just below this numinous 'window' of the altar stone, but they also block any sight of them.[42] The Stavelot crystal with parchment is a relatively early example of a common ornamental usage on reliquaries in which crystal covers tiny rectangles of parchment with painted imagery or even simple coloured fabric.[43] In these cases, the crystal is both protective and effectively transforms the ensemble with the parchment into a sort of inset 'gem'.[44] Given these many opacities and variations, it is clear that vision or 'seeing through' was not always ideally facilitated by rock crystal.

An additional objection to the narrative of always-better vision of relics must be that the circumstances of the viewer's encounter with reliquaries was often not ideally suited to uninhibited perception. A fourth-century account of the exposure of relics at Tebessa is presumably typical: 'Where once

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40 Taralon argues, on the evidence of a seventeenth-century engraving, that the gold back plate of the front gem had a circle cut out to hold the relics. Thus the gem would have been transparent to some degree. Taralon, 'Le Talisman de Charlemagne', see fig. 26, in which the gem almost looks like an eye staring back at the viewer.

41 Taralon, 'Le Talisman de Charlemagne', fig. 26.

42 Wittekind, *Altar – Reliquiar – Retabel*.

43 From the Walters Art Museum conservation report for 53.139: 'Five large cabochons of rock crystal, each encircled by small cabochons of blue glass, are on the front. Underneath each rock crystal lies a piece of red fabric. An additional piece of white parchment (?) is underneath the rock crystal in the center'. I thank Martina Bagnoli for her help with this material.

44 The use of crystal without a relic as well as crystal backed by parchment is discussed by Henze, 'Edelsteinallegorese'.

long rest had robbed them from our gaze, they blaze with light on a fitting pedestal, […]. From all around the Christian people, young and old, flow in to see them, happy to tread the holy threshold, singing their praises and hailing with outstretched hands the Christian faith'.[45] The vivid description includes a boisterous crowd, uneven lighting effects, and indeterminate (and ultimately inconsequential) viewing distances. One might compare this to the experience at Aachen some ten centuries later, when pilgrims in huge crowds eager to 'see' relics being displayed on feast days held up tiny metal mirrors to 'capture' and preserve the essence of the vision of the sacred that they experienced. These mirrors are attested in a woodcut and a few even survive.[46] Rather than the clear and controlled sight of a relic, these episodes record an emotional reception and welcome of a sacred 'deposit'. This is not precise vision but some essence of sight, or visual intent, or again a vision effect. Such stories make it clear that medieval standards of vision were very different from our own. Our expectations regarding the clarity, stability, and precision of sight are inappropriate for an earlier age that had no electrical light, precise optical equipment, or telephoto lenses.

Moreover, physical distance and difficulties were not the only barriers that impaired clarity of vision in the Middle Ages. A third objection to the presumption of the clear vision of relics was that not all viewers knew what to look for, that is, they were not *spiritually* prepared to see. In the sixth century, Gregory of Tours wrote of a gem on a cross: 'Whenever the gem is adored, it appears clear if the man is free from sin; but if as usually happens, a man has brought some guilt […] to him the gem appears as totally opaque'.[47] As we will see, similar effects of cloudiness and clarity are described as relative stages of meditative contemplation in the later Middle Ages. We must conclude that without a certain level of mental and spiritual preparedness, relic-viewing is not possible.

One sort of reliquary may serve as a valuable corrective to the supposition of medieval intentions of unmediated visibility of relics (cf. Figure 7.3).[48]

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45 *Inscriptiones latinae christianae ueteres*, ed. by Diehl, pp. 6–9, and 11–13, cited in Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, pp. 37–38.

46 Schwarz, 'The Mirror of the Artist and the Mirror of the Devout'.

47 Gregory of Tours, *De gloria martyrum*, 12, translated in Gregory of Tours, *Glory of the Martyrs*, ed. by van Dam, p. 34.

48 Gaborit-Chopin and Taburet-Delahaye, *Le Trésor de Conques*, no. 7, pp. 46–47; and Taralon, *Les Trésors des églises de France*, nos 390 and 540, plates 40 and 84. There was also an example at St Denis. See Conway, 'The Treasures of Saint Denis'.

      'Charles the Bald was also said to have given a copper-gilt lantern set with thirty-five crystals, which disappeared between 1505 and 1739. In 1505 it is simply called a lantern. Doublet says it belonged to Malchus, that it was of a very old-fashioned type, and that the light shone dimly through the crystals. He observes that it shows the mark of St Peter's sword, Malchus having held up the lantern to defend himself, but the sword glanced off one of the crystals and took away his ear. Both he and Millet say it was called the lantern of Judas. Inv. 1505, no. 209. At the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford is a bronze lantern of about the

Eleventh-century silver reliquaries at Conques and Beaulieu are notably lantern-shaped. Although it has been suggested that such reliquaries represent funeral lanterns, the original intention of the shape remains mysterious, and in these examples, even with the inclusion of crystal 'windows', relics are not easily visible. Perhaps, instead of allowing access to vision, in fulfilment of their form, the apertures on these lanterns were intended to allow light to *spill out*. As Patricia Cox Miller argues, the rhetoric of relic description is saturated with light imagery. Relics are said to *emit* light (as did the example from Tebessa discussed above).[49]

In sum, relic-viewing has as much to do with the imagination and intent of the viewer as it does the conditions of viewing. There is no doubt that reliquaries were created to manipulate the devotee's approach to relics: in some sense they concentrate his or her vision on the already concentrated essence of the relic fragment, creating an environment for the working of faith. By other means, however, they deflect or frustrate vision, even ostensibly blind the viewer with light. Given the many concerns expressed above about blockages, opacities, and barriers, what specific elements in reliquary design and presentation might be said to encourage or shape the vision of relics?

FIGURE 7.3. 'Lantern Jewel', London, British Museum, WB.183.
Photo © Trustees of the British Museum.

twelfth century, set with twenty-five crystals, which may give some idea of what the other was like'. Citing Doublet, *Histoire de […] S. Denys*, pp. 320, 324; and Millet, *Le Tresor Sacra […] de Sainct-Denis*, p. 134.

49   Cox Miller, *The Corporeal Imagination*, pp. 97–98.

Relic Presentation

A first concern must be the physical circumstances of vision. How was the devotee prepared for the sight of the relic as it was presented in architectural space? Such preparation might involve staircases, corridors, shrines, and altars.[50] One early and ubiquitous device used in shrines, the *fenestella*, serves as a particular and instructive example.[51] At holy sites in Rome and Jerusalem, windows controlled physical access to cult sites while providing limited visual entry. These windows were often narrow, and sometimes covered with perforated and decorative stone screens. Such apertures create a vision effect of intimate access to a tomb when actual access was surely restricted to an elite (as was the case with the shrine at St Peter's).[52] *Fenestellae* seemed to promise the possibility of touch while actually restricting access to sight alone.

Much later in the Middle Ages, perhaps from the twelfth century, but certainly from the thirteenth and fourteenth, so-called squints or 'hagioscopes' use a similar concept.[53] The small windows allow access to the sight of the holy elements of the altar from the exterior of a building, perhaps for the participation of lepers or anchorites, or alternately in the interior, for those in a private space or location with an obscured sightline to the altar (Figure 7.4). The shape of such squints may
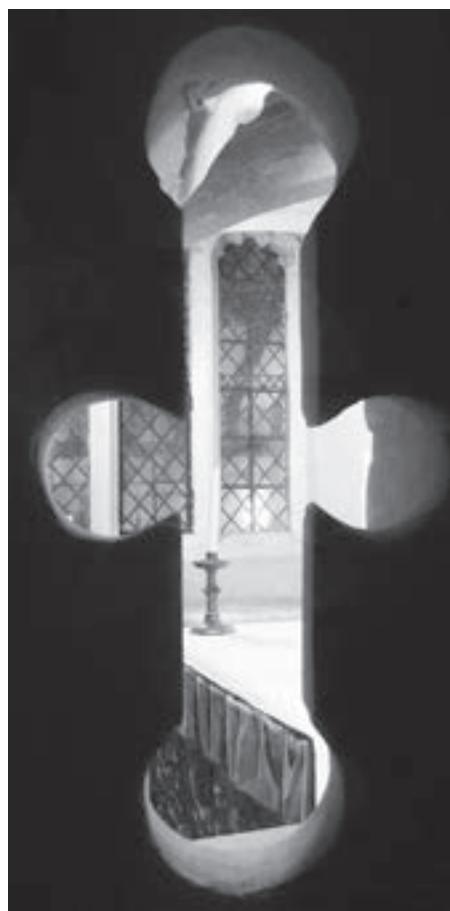
FIGURE 7.4. 'Squint through to the altar in the chantry chapel for Henry de Guildford (died 1312)', Compton (Surrey), Church of St Nicholas. Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International, attribution for credit: Babelstone; picture is cropped slightly.

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50 Hahn, 'Seeing and Believing'.
51 Christes and Möseneder, 'Fenestella'.
52 Toynbee and Ward-Perkins, *The Shrine of St Peter and the Vatican Excavations*, p. 217.
53 See the essay by Tina Bawden in this volume as well as that by Ousterhout, 'Sightlines, Hagioscopes, and Church Planning in Byzantine Cappadocia', in part inspired by our discussions about this essay.

have been simple or, as in some examples, incorporated angles that seem to create sightlines. There is evidence that certain examples not only directed the eye but controlled the body — for example, a low position would have forced the devotee to kneel.[54]

The control of sight and body is very clearly depicted in an image of conversion from an illustrated manuscript of a saint's life *c.* 1240 written and illustrated by Matthew Paris of the St Albans monastery in England.[55] The conversion is effected as the soon-to-be saint peers through an aperture at his spiritual mentor praying before a cross. (Later in the story, the identical miraculous cross is portrayed as a relic, and furthermore an object purporting to be this very cross was once kept at the abbey of St Albans as a sacred relic.) Despite the fact that he himself composed the Anglo-Norman version of the life of Alban, Matthew does not specify the circumstances of viewing in his text. In creating an image of the episode, however, Matthew purposefully elaborates the details. He adds a window and sets the viewing aperture below eye level so that Alban must bend as if in prayer to see the praying St Amphibalus. Furthermore, although the eyes of the two protagonists align, they do not meet; their gaze does not connect, but their minds share a vision and knowledge of the divine. Through mundane parameters of position of the body, visual angle, and proper use of the eyes, Matthew presents a model of proper looking and specifies its spiritual end.

Crystals and Mirrors

To leave the more general question of bodily position and hagioscopy — the sight of holy things that would include the cross and the Host — and return to reliquaries and space more generally, I would suggest that, although most instances of relic-viewing were not ideal, at times devotees must have had the opportunity, like Alban, to meditate at length upon a relic. If such a situation were possible, the cabochon crystal presents an ideal environment for such contemplation, but not for the reasons that are usually put forth.

As noted above, lenticular (lens-shaped) crystals are common throughout the Middle Ages, and there is often evidence that these gems were backed with metal, especially gold or silver foil, or often with a red material (see Plate V). I would suggest that, as with the lantern, we should imagine light was meant to be *shining out* of these elements. The gold and silver would obviously produce a brilliant effect. Alternatively, the red backing might indicate that the artist attempted to simulate a carbuncle, the mythical red gem that emitted light.[56]

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54 Le Pogam, 'The Hagioscope in the Princely Chapels in France'; Sauer, 'Architecture of Desire'. There is a useful list of sites in multiple countries with illustrations in the Wikipedia entry on 'Hagioscope'.

55 Hahn, 'Absent No Longer'.

56 Kornbluth makes a similar argument concerning the sixteenth-century Freiberg Crucifix

Whether or not this is the case, texts throughout the Middle Ages implied that gems and especially crystals themselves glowed, or interacted with light in very special ways that implicated the divine. In his *De Virginitate*, Ambrose writes of the Heavenly Jerusalem following Revelation 21. 11 that, 'in it the light is like a precious stone, such as the stone of jasper and crystal'.[57] Dante describes a sacral quality: 'as in glass, in amber, or in crystal, a ray shines so that there is no interval between its coming and its pervading all, so did the triform effect ray forth from the Lord'.[58] Many other texts repeat the idea that crystal 'shines' or is 'bright'.[59]

Its shining qualities relate to the heavenly nature of the crystal. The Revelation of John in this matter depends on the Old Testament vision of Ezekiel (1. 22) referencing the *crystalli horribilis* that appears above the heads of the beasts.[60] In an extended passage in his *Homily on Ezekiel*, Pope Gregory the Great gives two possible interpretations of crystal.[61] In the second he refers to the crystal as a figure of Christ, intimating a parallelism between the gem's nature as water that has frozen into incorruptible glory and Christ's resurrection.[62] In his primary interpretation, however, Gregory focuses more exclusively on the enduring hardness of crystal. In his investigation into the meaning of the heavenly vision, Gregory compares the figure of the crystal to the 'angelic power' that allows the residents of heaven to remain with their gaze fixed upon God, despite his fearful and terrible aspect. (It should be noted that Rabanus Maurus repeats these comments in abbreviated form and others echo them.)[63]

One might even argue that as the shape of the cabochon gem implies, earthly crystals can function as an 'oculus' of sorts. In a fashion similar to an architectural oculus at the peak of a dome, they allow celestial vision; as gem and crystal they fortify the viewer's gaze. An eye, an oculus, projects power outward at the same time that it invites attention inward. But rather than

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with a reused Carolingian crystal carved with a Baptism scene and mounted over a metallic red surface perhaps to simulate a carbuncle: Kornbluth, *Engraved Gems of the Carolingian Empire*, p. 58. For carbuncles, see Meier, *Gemma Spiritalis*, pp. 246–53; and Heller, 'Light as Glamour', p. 953; and Murphy, *Gemstone of Paradise*, pp. 50–51, on the carbuncle, and in general on gemstones in literature.

57 This translation, based on Ambrose, *De virginitate*, ed. by Cazzaniga, is a revision of one which was reprinted by Peregrina Publishing in 1987: Ambrose, *On Virginity*.

58 *Paradiso*, 29:22–36, discussed by Kay, 'Dante's Empyrean and the Eye of God', p. 45.

59 To note just a few: Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita Sancti Leobini Episcopi Carnotensis*, 88, Cap. 23, ed. by Migne, col. 172B; Primasius Adrumetanensis, *Commentariorum super Apocalypsim B. Joannis Libri Quinque*, 68, Lib. v, Cap. 21, ed. by Migne, col. 923; Osbernus Cantuariensis, *Vita Sancti Dunstani*, 137, Cap. 23, ed. by Migne, col. 471.

60 Russell Christman, *'What Did Ezekiel See?'*, pp. 2, 10.

61 Gregory the Great, *Homiliarum in Ezechielem Prophetam Libri Duo*, i, Cap. 17–20, ed. by Migne, cols 849–50.

62 Discussed by Kornbluth, *Engraved Gems of the Carolingian Empire*, p. 18; and Kessler, 'Speculum', p. 11.

63 Rabanus Maurus, *Commentaria in Ezechielem*, ii. 1, ed. by Migne, col. 536.

resist the penetration of the gaze, the action of the lenticular gem might be conceived as that of a convex mirror, and specifically, a particular action of the medieval mirror. The mirror, the crystal, invites our gaze but at the same time 'looks back'.[64]

Medieval students of vision, including the Muslim scholar Alhazen, a crucial source for the scholastic thinkers of the thirteenth century, talk of mirrors and the sorts of images they produce in a very particular way; here Mark Smith summarizes:

> The term ymago, or 'image' properly speaking, is reserved for what is seen in a mirror, and it is etymologically related to the psychological faculty of 'imagi-nation'. In other words, the ymago is a subjective construct, pure and simple, whereas the forma [or image seen by the eye] is both subjective and objective. Or, to put it anachronistically, the image abstracted by the eye is at least partly real, whereas the image seen in the mirror is wholly virtual.[65]

This effect of the virtual image of the mirror would, of course, be exaggerated by the distortion caused by the convex or cabochon shape of early mirrors and/or lenticular gems.

Or to rephrase yet again, the image in the mirror is a very distinctive sort of sight, more akin to the divine rather than tied to the mechanical transmission of species to the eye.[66] It can wondrously capture the large and far away on a tiny surface. It can even fix the sacred as the Aachen pilgrim mirrors were thought to do, preserving the sacred 'imago' to be 'seen' over and over again.[67]

Even more, it can reveal the hidden. Roger Bacon writes: 'Anything that has been hidden away […] can be brought to light through reflected vision'.[68] And more importantly, it has the power to transform those who look deeply into the mirror.[69] As in ii Corinthians 3. 18: 'But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass [mirror] the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord'. Here again, the image in the mirror is spiritual vision. It may be flawed and distorted because in earthly vision 'errors and deformations […] [are] ever present', but it becomes the 'normative model of spiritual vision'.[70] Ultimately, looking into a mirror is described as a spiritual process that both interacts with the human body and yet in some mysterious ways is

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64 I am alluding, of course, to Jacques Lacan's story of the uncanny sardine can: Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, p. 95.

65 Smith, 'What Is the History of Medieval Optics Really About?', esp. p. 191.

66 Hahn, 'Vision'.

67 Schwarz, 'The Mirror of the Artist and the Mirror of the Devout'.

68 Denery, *Seeing and Being Seen in the Later Medieval World*, p. 75; *Roger Bacon and the Origins of 'Perspectiva'*, iii. 3. 3, ed. and trans. by Lindberg, p. 330, lines 165–67.

69 Taylor, 'Un Miroer salutaire'.

70 Denery clarifies that Peter of Limoges argues that it is proper spiritual work to identify and eliminate those deformations: *Seeing and Being Seen in the Later Medieval World*, p. 105.

also a simulacrum of it. As above, the Aachen pilgrim mirrors retain the vision of the relics just as Bonaventure argued the senses were indelibly and physically impressed or changed via sensation.[71]

In a treatise filled with exempla inspired by the new developments in the study of optics, the thirteenth-century Parisian theologian Peter of Limoges clarifies the moral implications of the study of optics, delivering ideas suitable for use in sermons. In one instance, he helpfully describes four separate stages in the process of vision. The last stage culminates in the innermost, the eye of the mind (or heart) in which the devotee assesses what has been seen, seeking a moral and spiritual meaning via a 'common nerve' in what Denery characterizes as an 'optics of interiority'.[72] Peter concludes by likening the process of examining the soul to looking into a mirror to find any stain or darkness, and he extends the metaphor, urging that such stains be polished away. In other words, again the mirror acts very much like a body, the body like a mirror.

The twelfth-century mystic Hildegard of Bingen predates the optical studies discussed above, but she already compared her visions to reflections in water and used the figure of an intervening crystal window-like apparatus.[73] As Barbara Newman describes it, 'a medium of spiritual perception attuned to material reality, yet it neither depends on nor interferes with the normal working of her senses. It is an internal mirror in which forms come and go at will, illumined by its own radiant brilliance'.[74]

Of course, the most important text for the introduction of the mirror into issues of divine sight is the renowned biblical verse from *ii* Corinthians (13. 12). In that scriptural text, we are reminded that we see 'now through a glass (or mirror — *speculum*) darkly but then face to face'. Physical and mundane sight is disparaged, but the text speaks to the hope that a Christian might enjoy a vision of the divine after death.

It should be noted that at the same time that the mirror could allow a pre-view of the divine, because of the virtual nature of its vision, it served to protect human eyes from that very sight of the divine, a dangerous sight indeed. The protective mirror was an apparatus that, in effect, solves the problem posed by the *crystallis horribilis*. Just at the turn of the thirteenth century, in his *Anticlaudianus*, Alan of Lille writes: 'The Mirror of Faith allows

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71 Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God*, trans. by Cousins, p. 79. See Clark, 'Optics for Preachers', p. 337; and Denery, *Seeing and Being Seen in the Later Medieval World*, p. 92.

72 Denery, *Seeing and Being Seen in the Later Medieval World*, pp. 107–08, citing *Tractatus moralis de oculo* vii. 8 and 12. See also Clark, 'Optics for Preachers', pp. 333, 338; and now Peter of Limoges, *The Moral Treatise on the Eye*, ed. and trans. by Newhauser.

73 Hildegard of Bingen, *Scivias*, trans. by Hart and Bishop, pp. 293–94.

74 Newman, 'Hildegard of Bingen', p. 167. Such radiance also comes into play in Augustine who speaks of 'that light by which the soul is illumined so that it may perceive all things with a true understanding, either in itself or in the light. For that light is God himself'. Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram* 12.30–31, ed. by Zycha, p. 425. Cited by Nolan, *Now Through a Glass Darkly*, p. 168.

us to see […] God [that is, the mysteries, *per aenigmate*] indirectly [that is, *per speculum*] and live', effectively allowing 'the miracle of coexistence of radically different orders'.[75] Just as one uses a darkened glass or a mirror to protect the eyes when looking at an eclipse, similar protection was required for looking at God, who was believed to blaze so brilliantly that human eyes could not bear to look at him directly.[76] In an Ambrogio Lorenzetti altarpiece, as Herbert Kessler has argued, all of the saints in heaven gaze upon the incarnate Christ Child, but at the Virgin's feet Faith must peer into a mirror in order to see the divine mystery of the Trinity.[77]

Thus, it is no surprise that among the many uses and meanings of the mirror in the late Middle Ages, its service as a metaphor of the means of ascent to the mystic's vision of God came to the fore. Richard of St Victor uses the now familiar trope of cleansing the mirror in his treatise *The Twelve Patriarchs*:

> Whoever thirsts to see his God — let him wipe his mirror, let him cleanse his spirit, […] hold it so it does not adhere to the earth […] wipe it so it does not become dirty from the dust of useless thoughts […] gaze into it so that the eye of […] intention does not turn toward empty pursuits. When the mirror has been wiped and gazed into for a long time, a kind of splendor of divine light begins to shine in it and a great beam of unexpected vision appears to his eyes […] the soul is kindled […] and is animated to see the living light that is above it […] conceiv[ing] the flame of longing for the sight of God.[78]

Although, in this text, the mirror may be metaphorical, the process of looking, beginning in the mundane world and completed with the interior examination of the soul (cf. Peter of Limoges already in 1260–70), makes it clear that this method was not intended to remain a metaphor.

Indeed, in his autobiography, Henry Suso writes of a much less abstract experience, one that is immediate, intimate, and uniquely personal and that replaces a mirror with a crystal:

> And once in the morning after a period of suffering it happened that he was surrounded by the heavenly hosts in a vision. He asked one of their shining heavenly princes to show him what the hidden dwelling place of God in his soul looked like. The angel said to him, 'Look with joy into yourself and see how dear God plays his games of love with your affectionate soul'. He quickly looked inside and saw that over his heart his body was as clear as crystal, and he saw in the middle of his heart eternal Wisdom sitting quietly with a pleasing appearance. Nearby the soul of the servant

75 Nolan, *Now Through a Glass Darkly*, p. 102 and also p. 101. See also Alan of Lille, *Anticlaudianus*, trans. by Sheridan, p. 26.
76 Nolan, *Now Through a Glass Darkly*, p. 102.
77 Kessler, 'Speculum'. See also Kessler, *Seeing Medieval Art*.
78 Richard of St Victor, *The Twelve Patriarchs*, trans. by Zinn, p. 130.

Figure 7.5. 'Mondsee Gospels', Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, W.8. Photo © Cynthia Hahn.

was sitting and longing for heaven. It was inclined with love at God's side, embraced by his arms, and pressed to his divine heart. There outside itself and immersed in love it lay in the arms of its beloved God.[79]

As Hamburger showed that theologians and mystics base their exercises in actual sight, here Suso takes the physical process of vision to its proper spiritual ends resulting in a momentary glimpse of infinite truth and sustained comfort.

Both Hamburger and Kessler have argued that the mirror is not only 'symbolic'; I would also add that it is not only a 'metaphor'.[80] Outside the realm of theological treatises, crystals and mirrors were invaluable for the realization of spiritual exercises and used in many practices. Gazing into crystal balls, an ancient idea that survived into the Middle Ages, is just one example.[81] Such gazing purports to condense and capture the truth of faraway

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79   Suso, *The Exemplar, with Two German Sermons*, ed. by McGinn and Tobin, p. 73.
80   Kessler, 'Speculum', p. 13, and Hamburger, 'Speculations on Speculation', p. 396.
81   Kunz, *The Curious Lore of Precious Stones*; and see Miles, 'Visual-Tactual Illusions from a Crystal Ball', who discusses the sense of movement among other effects.

things, evoking the crystal orbs representing cosmic power and sometimes displayed by angels (as in the wonderful example on the famous Westminster retable).[82] Even today, one expects to see a floating, immaterial 'vision' if one practises this sort of endeavour.

Crystals on Reliquaries

But finally we return to our concern with the use of rock crystal on reliquaries. Given what we have discovered about the use and meaning of crystal, this practice must reveal the importance of crystals for creating an environment of devotion. On the early eleventh-century Mondsee Gospels treasury binding (Figure 7.5) — a rare surviving example of the sort of reliquary presentation that must once have been common, but which often has been disrupted by later restoration — a crystal cabochon with a gold backing dominates the centre of a filigreed cross whose quadrants hold ivory images of the four Evangelists.[83] Compared to the hard and precisely worked metal and ivory surfaces of the rest of the cover, the crystal presents the viewer's eye with an indeterminate, glowing, and mysterious 'space'. Furthermore, because the gold backing of the gem is painted with the image of the crucifixion, there is no confusion of the 'image' that the viewer should see in this space. It is, however, only with foreknowledge and with persistent searching that one can find what seems to be a tiny splinter of wood that lies across the chest of Christ — presumably a relic of the True Cross. In gazing into this crystal, the heavenly effect and the vision of the crucifixion is thus specified before any certainty of 'seeing' the relic occurs. The relic only gradually appears after long study, as a small blur, in effect, a distortion that crosses Christ's chest diagonally. Indeed, it is the figure of Christ that draws the eye; it seems to float, almost expanding, in an indeterminate space behind the crystal — an image indeed.[84]

A second example of the use of a crystal in a reliquary similarly exhibits an image rather than a relic to the viewer, but here it seems the image is actually preferred to any glimpse of a relic (Plate VI). A pendant from *c.* 1200 in the British Museum, probably from Scotland, exhibits on its face a very clear dome-shaped crystal allowing the contemplation of an array of pearls that tightly frame a cross. The cross itself is constructed of wood surrounded by a thin golden border. Although the use of wood for the centre of this cross

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82 Kessler, 'Speculum', p. 10; and see the macro photograph of the retable in the link to the photography of the project at Bucklow, 'The Westminster Retable'.

83 For the Mondsee Gospels now in the Walters Museum in Baltimore, see Steenbock, *Der Kirchliche Prachteinband im frühen Mittelalter*, no. 87, pp. 181–83; Muthesius, 'The Silk over the Spine of the Mondsee Gospel Lectionary'; and Bagnoli and others, *Treasures of Heaven*, no. 61, pp. 60–61. Kornbluth, *Engraved Gems of the Carolingian Empire*, pp. 54–56, for Carolingian crystals with crucifixions.

84 For another use of cabochon crystals that may relate to similar vision issues, see Jung, 'Crystalline Wombs and Pregnant Hearts'.

makes reference to the wood of the True Cross relic that was once contained within the pendant, it is not itself the relic. That relic, along with others of various saints, was contained in the backplate of the reliquary (Plate VI, left), accessible only if the reliquary is disassembled and the backplate is unscrewed. Rather than a view of the relics (and despite the presence of the very fine crystal), the reliquary seems to have as its intent the presentation of an *image* of the cross combined with an inscription (on the edge of the pendant) naming the saints whose relics are inside.[85]

Given this arrangement, one wonders why the goldsmith went to the trouble of using a crystal. Once more, the intention must be to create a *vision effect*, a devotional focus for the gaze of the faithful Christian, allowing the contemplation of the true meaning of the 'invulnerable sign', as Paulinus called the cross so many centuries before. Rather than a tiny splinter, the devotee contemplates an image of the cross that grows and expands to fill the space; the pearls, like so many swelling, glowing stars or incandescent clouds, push in around the cross to create a celestial cushion. Rather than clarity, the vision is somehow tinged by an atmosphere, a 'pearly' light. This striking effect is not what one would expect of a tiny object (5.5×5.2 cm), but is one of expansion, the creating of a cosmic vision that simulates the blessed visionary abilities of a saint as so aptly described by Gregory the Great: 'all the powers of his mind unfolded, and he saw the whole world gathered up before his eyes in what appeared to be a single ray of light'. Alternately, as Dante wrote of a crystal: 'a ray shines so that there is no interval between its coming and its pervading all, so did the triform effect ray forth from the Lord'.[86]

These two medieval examples of the use of rock crystal on reliquaries present a clear picture of the possibilities and value of the use of the gem. Indeed, such was the prestige of the material that despite the ability that emerged in the Renaissance to make clear glass,[87] rock crystal persisted as a valuable addition to reliquaries. Its visionary potential is clearly evident in a sixteenth- or seventeenth-century example in the British Museum, a tiny lantern jewel (Figure 7.3). Perhaps made in Spain or Mexico and only four

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85 The inscription reads: BM '+ SEXPSTI:NINIAN / ANDREEX MAVRIS:GEORGII: MERG:D(?) NOR:F(?)ERG:B(?)O / NEF(?)SE:MARIE' ('Of Jesus Christ, of Ninian, of Andrew of the Moors, of George, of Margaret (?), of Norbert (?), of Fergus (?), of Boniface (?), of St Mary'); AN319176001. See the British Museum website: <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/H_1946-0407-1>; and Bagnoli and others, *Treasures of Heaven*, no. 72, p. 131. This article was completed in 2012, but since then this reliquary has garnered attention for its materiality and the difficulty of seeing through the crystal, as well as its 'Scottish-ness': see Overbey, 'Reflections on the Surface'; and Overbey, 'Seeing through Stone'.

86 Gregory the Great, *Dialogues*, trans. by Zimmerman, p. 201 — This was Benedict watching the soul of Germanus, Bishop of Capua, rise into heaven: 'mentis laxato sinu, quasi sub uno solis radio cunctum in suis oculis mundum collectum uidit'. And Dante, *Paradiso*, 29:22–36, from Kay, 'Dante's Empyrean and the Eye of God', p. 45.

87 McCray, 'Glassmaking in Renaissance Italy'.

centimetres tall, the minute gem uses a hexagonally shaped tube of rock crystal, enframed by a golden 'tempietto' to display two tiny sculptures of boxwood. It is uncertain if the piece contains/ed a relic although it is assumed that it does. In looking at the lantern, one must peer in through the less than perfect rock crystal and around the tiny columns to make out the Crucifixion with Mary, John, and kneeling Magdalene, and on the opposite face, the *Ecce Homo*. The celestial setting of the whole is indicated by the cherubic heads repeated on either side of the pendant underneath.[88]

It is surely true that our present-day desire to see, and our belief in the ability to see clearly, affects the way that reliquaries have been restored and are presented in museums. Perhaps as early as the thirteenth century with the growing availability of large pieces of superior clear African rock crystal,[89] many reliquaries had visible relics, but today almost all do — whether they are modern reliquaries, or 'restored' medieval examples. The tiny lantern reliquary in the British Museum assures us that this is modern folly, that 'spiritual' vision in the Middle Ages and even for centuries afterward was not meant to be clear and unimpeded.

In conclusion, although reliquaries are spectacularly beautiful and constructed of sumptuous materials, they are made so only in order to draw our eyes to them. After that initial attraction, once they have us in their thrall, as we work over their surfaces as connoisseurs of the material world, our eyes are deflected, mundane vision is frustrated. Only after such enticement and rejection do we come to a laser-like focus on the bit of bone, dust, or wood, wrapped in cloth or enclosed in protective substances.[90] Perhaps it is there, perhaps not, but nevertheless in our efforts and intent to see, the reliquary sets up a yearning, and that desire ultimately makes the connection between our finite earthly bodies and the infinity of the celestial world.

Durandus of Mende, in the thirteenth century, wrote: 'We hide these relics in a reliquary, so as to imitate holding them [the saints] in our heart'.[91] In her treatment of the rhetorical consideration of relics, Patricia Cox Miller explains the importance of the work of the imagination in terms of an active aesthetics that transforms relics from bones and dust to beauty and power

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88 The British Museum website (research) has an excellent and extensive entry on this jewel: <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/H_WB-183>.

89 Raulet, *Rock Crystal Treasures*, p. 59, who quotes Nasir-i-Khusraw, a Persian commenting on the fine quality of Maghreb crystal and its new availability in the eleventh century. Also Horton, 'The Swahili Corridor'. Now see work by Stephane Pradines in Hahn and Shalem, *Seeking Transparency*. For an example of a type of reliquary that insists upon visibility, see my discussion in Hahn, 'The Sting of Death Is the Thorn, but the Circle of the Crown Is Victory over Death'.

90 Perhaps even inside an opaque sculpture, or not? Pawlik, *Das Bildwerk als Reliquiar?*.

91 'Haec [reliquiae] in capsa recondimus, cum ad imitandum ea in corde retinemus'. Durandus *Rationale* 34 lib i c. 7. n. 23; cited by Snoek, *Medieval Piety from Relics to the Eucharist*, p. 191 n. 96. Now see Guilelmus Durandus, *The Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, trans. by Thibodeau, p. 83.

available to the soul. That is an aesthetics of the real and mundane but one that is transformative.[92] The beauty of a reliquary does not, therefore, only function to honour the saint, and mediate the 'ugliness' of the relic, it also takes part, along with the beauty of the liturgy, the shrine, hymns, poems, and prayers, in creating or constructing the saint and his or her spiritual meaning for (and by) the viewer. Beauty is thus an inalienable and required quality of reliquaries, but rather than being taken for granted as intrinsic to materials or craftsmanship it was actively sought as an experience. Victricius of Rouen wrote: 'We see small relics and little blood. But truth perceives that these tiny things are brighter than the sun, as the Lord says in the Gospel, "My saints shall shine like the sun in My Father's Kingdom".'[93] Seeing the relic was not the point; experiencing the reality of the divine was the desired *vision effect*.

92   Cox Miller, *The Corporeal Imagination*, and Cox Miller, 'Figuring Relics'.

93   Victricius of Rouen, *De laude sanctorum*, 10, translated in *Medieval Hagiography*, ed. by Head, p. 44; cited by Cox Miller, 'Relics, Rhetoric and Mental Spectacles in Late Ancient Christianity', esp. p. 46.

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TINA BAWDEN

Channelling the Gaze

Squints in Late Medieval Screens*

> On a recent tour of East Anglian churches, we kneeled
> before small keyhole squints that pierced the dado of the
> parish church at Lavenham […]. The positioning created a
> curious feeling of both exposure and voyeuristic pleasure,
> for we could only see through the openings while pressed
> up against the screen, in effect 'being first' and leading the
> (imaginary) congregation in our proximity to the chancel.[1]

The personal experience of using a squint described by Virginia Chieffo Raguin
and Sarah Stanbury in the introduction to their 2005 volume on *Women's
Space: Patronage, Place, and Gender in the Medieval Church* both explicitly and
implicitly raises several issues discussed in the following essay. Implicitly, the
authors reveal the problem at the heart of studying such a fleeting act as that
of looking in historical terms: The medieval experience of looking through
squints is only accessible with reference to experiences of our own and the
material evidence provided by the squints in their church setting. Explicitly,
the passage introduces the context of the parish community and the issue of
devotion as guidelines for understanding squints and the visual experience
provided by them.

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1 Chieffo Raguin and Stanbury, 'Introduction', pp. 7–8.

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FIGURE 8.1. 'Chancel screen with squint', Titchwell (Norfolk),
St Mary, fifteenth century. Photo by the author.

The insertion of squints into wooden screens is a phenomenon particular
to late medieval parish churches in England and Wales. A number of chancel
and parclose screens in parish churches have one or more small apertures
of different shapes piercing the upper third of the dado. The term 'elevation
squint' commonly used to refer to them is suggestive of their function, which
appears to have been to provide a view of the elevation of the Host at Mass;
their position corresponds to the eye-height of a kneeling adult.[2] Visual access
to the Host at the moment of transubstantiation during the elevation was of
utmost importance to lay people in the late Middle Ages, who were expected
to kneel during this moment.[3] Elevation squints thus seem to have been born
out of a need created by late medieval liturgy and devotion, and not provided
for by English screen design. Most English screens from the fourteenth century

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2   Authors writing in the first half of the twentieth century suggested that elevation squints
    enabled children to see the Mass: Camm, 'Some Norfolk Rood-Screens', p. 255; Vallance,
    English Church Screens, p. 40. Other functions initially suggested for elevation squints
    include receiving communion, giving confession, and ringing the sacring bell. These are now
    generally discarded as implausible by scholars.
3   On the importance of visual access to the Host in late medieval religion, see Rubin, *Corpus
    Christi*, and Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*. On kneeling: Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, p. 57;
    Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 97, 100; Binski, 'The English Parish Church and its Art',
    p. 13. The Elevation scene of the Seven-Sacrament font at West Lynn (*c*. 1470) shows a figure
    kneeling in front of what might be a screen and a man and woman standing behind: see
    Lunnon, 'Observations on the Changing Form of Chancel Screens', fig. 10, p. 121.

onwards have an upper section with open arcades structured by thin mullions or shafts, and a panelled lower section (Figure 8.1). When standing, viewers in front of the screen can easily see into the chancel or chapel space through the upper section; their view is only obstructed by the panels of the dado when sitting or kneeling.

Elevation squints are not based on formal instruction; there is no Church decree or text ordering the perforation of parish church screens. Furthermore, no textual documentation on the insertion or use of an elevation squint is known to date. Despite the lack of sources pertaining to squints, historians working in various fields have shown themselves fascinated with these apertures and their connection to the role of screens. In his seminal 1999 article on the art of the English parish church, Paul Binski stipulates the importance of studying screens and squints for the history of vision.[4] The paradoxical status of a screen which seems to exclude and therefore hinder participation, but at the same time invites a heightened sense of mystery and adds value to visual communication passing across it, has often been noted.[5] Specific historical connections between the kind of view enabled by screens and squints and other kinds of visuality have only been hinted at, however. Binski temptingly suggests a connection between the creation of apertures in screens for viewing the Host proposed by the Dominican Chapter in 1240 and the motif of the *ostium apertum* used as a window by St John in English book illuminations of the Apocalypse 'at exactly this time',[6] without investigating the parallel further. I am proposing here that in order to examine the importance squints might have for our understanding of late medieval visuality (and vision) in contexts such as the parish and lay devotion, we first need to gain a better idea of their material appearance and variety as a basis for asking exactly what sort of view they allow.

In light of the interest shown in elevation squints it is surprising how little detailed information can be found on specific examples. Although the term turns up frequently in publications by art historians, church historians, and archaeologists, authors give at most a handful of examples, the only exception being Aymer Vallance's *English Church Screens*.[7] The number of elevation squints

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4 Binski, 'The English Parish Church and its Art'.

5 Bond, *Screens and Galleries*, p. 13: 'Nothing adds so much to that most potent of all effects in church architecture, "mystery", as a screen, with its vistas half hidden, half revealed, of beautiful and holy things beyond'; Camm, 'Some Norfolk Rood-Screens', p. 239: 'The idea of mystery [...] was fostered and enhanced by these screens'. More recently, Jacqueline E. Jung has analysed the way in which 'even the most seemingly impenetrable partitions accommodated — even, perhaps, amplified — laypeople's desire to see the altar' by means of 'windows [...] squints [and] [...] doors flung open at the Consecration': Jung, 'Seeing through Screens', p. 189.

6 Binski, 'The English Parish Church and its Art', p. 14.

7 Vallance, *English Church Screens*, pp. 40–42, has twenty-eight examples. Camm, 'Some Norfolk Rood-Screens', p. 252, has one example (Wickhampton). Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, p. 97, has four examples (South Burlingham, South Walsham, Lavenham, Roxton).

on a screen, their shape, distribution, size, or general physical appearance is hardly ever mentioned. The curiosity status they are thereby awarded is at odds with the central role they are thought to play for our understanding of late medieval visuality and lay devotion. The following aims to take a step towards redressing this imbalance by providing a systematic study of squints as traces of experience, contributing to the project of understanding and analysing the centrality of both vision and the visual in late medieval culture. A first part clarifies how the squints at issue here relate to other significantly aligned apertures, and outlines problems of terminology. In a second part, I will take a look at the material evidence. This is supplemented in the Appendix with a preliminary list which compiles published squints with my own findings. More than anything, it shows the need for further analysis and study. Third and fourth parts then move in on the particular gaze a squint allows by analysing the role of screens in the late medieval parish church and placing this in the context of late medieval ideas about seeing and devotional practice.

Aligned Apertures: Issues of Terminology

From the nineteenth century onwards, scholars have been intrigued by unusually placed and aligned apertures in the building structure and fur- nishings of church buildings. These apertures, which can be terminologically subdivided into low side windows, hagioscopes, squints, and elevation squints, have in common an association with the east end of the church, most notably with the chancel, sometimes more specifically with altars or another ritual focus. The earliest instance of scholarly interest was directed to so-called 'low side windows'. The question of their function sparked a lively discussion amongst Victorian ecclesiologists. The term refers to (originally unglazed) 'small window-like apertures set lower than the main windows, or of downwards extensions of one or more of the lights of the westernmost of the ordinary chancel windows'.[8] In the most recent study of the phenomenon, Paul Barnwell draws a comparison with windows in secular buildings, concluding that low side windows were inserted for ventilation, discarding theories which see them connected to aspects of ritual or the liturgy.[9] Vision, light, air, and partial physical access are, broadly

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Binski, 'The English Parish Church and its Art', p. 14, refers to one example (Stanton Harcourt). Chieffo Raguin and Stanbury, 'Introduction', p. 7, have one example (Lavenham). Kroesen, 'Squints in Nederland', fig. 4, p. 211, has one example (Stanton Harcourt). Roffey, *The Medieval Chantry Chapel*, p. 97, mentions three examples of elevation squints in chapel screens (Winchester, Cheddar, Mere). Lunnon, 'Observations on the Changing Form of Chancel Screens', p. 120 and n. 20, p. 129, names one previously unpublished example (Thompson) and refers to Vallance for further examples.

8   Barnwell, 'Low Side Windows', p. 50.

9   He argues that low side windows are found near the chancel or near a side altar because these are the most frequented areas, drawing the use of incense and the presence of candles,

speaking, the themes that have informed functional interpretation both of low side windows and of hagioscopes.[10] In a study on the latter, Christine Kratzke lists three functions: as apertures in the outside walls of churches hagioscopes provide a view of a cult object inside the church, at the same time transporting its sacred powers to the outside; alternatively, hagioscopes allow a very precise shaft of light to fall upon a particular object on the inside of the church.[11] The term 'hagioscope' has also been used for openings in walls connecting two interiors, for example, the opening between an anchorite's cell and the interior of a church, and for windows connecting private oratories or bedrooms with court chapels.[12]

There is a certain amount of overlap between the definitions of low side windows and hagioscopes on the one hand and the term 'squint' on the other hand. Both 'hagioscope' and 'squint' etymologically make reference to the act of seeing. In 1916, Francis Bond used the term 'squint' to refer to 'an aperture, usually oblique, affording a view of the altar'.[13] The examples he provided were openings which had been cut into the wall at either side of the chancel arch, or into the masonry dividing a chapel or side space from the chancel and the high altar. Subsequent scholars have improved Bond's definition — which, as it stands, does not exclude low side windows and hagioscopes — by limiting the term 'squint' to apertures between two interior spaces.[14] These squints are neither exclusive to Britain,[15] nor to a particular type of church building, nor is their occurrence limited to a particular period. The apertures of interest here, on the other hand, are found only in English and Welsh screens and seem to be almost exclusive to late medieval parish churches.[16] The term 'elevation squint' is not satisfactory in distinguishing these kinds of perforations from those cut into church walls, however, as it suggests that a difference in function

and therefore most in need of ventilation: see Barnwell, 'Low Side Windows', esp. p. 68. His arguments are only partially convincing as the same reasoning regarding their position could lead to a different interpretation: low side windows are found near the chancel because they provide a view of particularly important objects or actions in the church interior. This interpretation is equally supported by the fact they were unglazed, as vision and ventilation have the same prerequisites in this regard.

10 The apertures are therefore also related to *fenestellae* which provide access to tombs or holy sites and are connected even more closely to their ritual focus in spatial terms.

11 Kratzke, 'Ausstrahlung und Anblick', p. 71. Her field of enquiry is limited to Cistercian abbey churches.

12 See also the discussion of hagioscopes by Cynthia Hahn in this volume. Eimer, 'Mauerdurchbrechender Blick und Hagioskop'; Le Pogam, 'The Hagioscope in the Princely Chapels in France'; Ousterhout, 'Sightlines, Hagioscopes, and Church Planning in Byzantine Cappadocia'. I am grateful to one of the reviewers for suggesting this most recent article.

13 Bond, *The Chancel*, p. 242.

14 Kroesen, 'Squints in Nederland', p. 197; Roffey, *The Medieval Chantry Chapel*, p. 57, also refers to them as 'internal "windows"'.

15 Justin E. A. Kroesen has studied examples in the Netherlands and in Germany: see Kroesen, 'Squints in Nederland'.

16 For an exception, see the priory church St Mary, Abergavenny (Monmouthshire): Appendix.

is connected to the difference in material. In fact, the relationships between, respectively, the material surrounding the squint, its function, and its potential group of users are all contingent. For example, one of the most important functions of squints cut into interior walls or piers seems to have been to allow celebrants to synchronize aspects of the liturgy, providing a view from a side altar to the high altar.[17] This function cannot be completely discarded for squints in screens where they are associated with an altar. The screen in St Edmund, South Burlingham (Norfolk) would appear to be such an example: The three circular holes on the north side and the cross-shaped squint on the south side of the door are situated above unpainted sections of the screen which indicate that there used to be altars here. That they were used by a priest celebrating Mass at the side altars is not likely, however, as he would have been standing and therefore able to look through the open arcade section of the screen. In this particular case, maybe one has to imagine people kneeling close to the altar in order to peer through the squints.[18] Conversely, the use of masonry squints for the visual participation in the liturgy cannot be ruled out, as recent studies have shown that there are squints placed lower down in walls and thus probably intended for use by lay people while sitting or kneeling.[19]

As the discussion shows, questions of terminology are far from being resolved and quite possibly irresolvable due to the heterogeneous and location-specific nature of these apertures. In my opinion, however, in regard to squints it is worth considering a more neutral, descriptive distinction between 'screen squints' and 'wall squints'. This avoids the difficulties incurred by the functional terms at the same time as doing away with the terminologically misleading imbalance between 'squints' and 'elevation squints'.[20] While it is sensible to exclude functional aspects from the terminology with regard to other types of squints, the question of function necessarily re-emerges in a discussion of what looking through a squint means.

Indeed, the main differences between wall squints and screen squints emerge when considering their physical creation and the kind of view they allow their

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17   For problems with this theory, see Kroesen, 'Squints in Nederland', p. 200.

18   Duffy suggests this for St Mary in Roxton (Bedfordshire), where the squints above the painted saints on the north side of the screen are bigger than those on the south because 'a nave altar prevented the devotee getting close': Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, p. 97.

19   Kroesen, 'Squints in Nederland', pp. 204–06, Krewerd (Groningen, NL) has two squints 53 and 60 cm above the floor; further examples are Holtrop (East Frisia, D) and Naaldwijk (Westland, NL). Roffey, *The Medieval Chantry Chapel*, p. 59, the north chapel of St Mary, Yatton (Somerset), has a squint less than a metre over floor level, intended for use of a small group of people seated or kneeling in the chapel: fig. 21, p. 58, and for a reconstruction of the visual topography, see fig. 53, p. 112.

20   For example, Kroesen, 'Squints in Nederland' distinguishes elevation squints from 'liturgical squints' (p. 203), despite the uncertainties he acknowledges regarding the specifics of late medieval liturgy (see note 17 above) and the impossibility of ever knowing what a squint was actually used for. The terms suggested here make it easier to approach cases in which both wall and screen squints survive without preconceptions as to their function, for example St Margaret of Antioch in Cowlinge (Suffolk) and St John in Winchester (Hampshire).

FIGURE 8.2. 'Chancel screen with squint, and view through the squint', South Walsham (Norfolk), St Mary, after 1437. Photo by the author.

users.[21] The oblique apertures cut into the masonry of church buildings are often of considerable depth. To construct them would have required a certain amount of planning, work, and often even engineering knowledge. The small openings drilled and carved into the screens in parish churches, on the other hand, are usually more inconspicuous, and their technical creation would not have presented difficulties to a larger number of people. Wall squints are often wider on one side than on the other, thereby focusing the gaze through a funnel and intended for a viewer standing at a distance from the opening. The depth of many wall squints entails that the viewer has limited control over the area of vision at the narrow end in the sense that changes in the viewer's body position only change the cut-out of the view attained slightly before obliterating it completely. The rigidity of the viewing arrangement

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21   In this way, the terminology also makes sense for Continental examples such as the centrally placed rose aperture in the 1240 stone *Lettner* of St Mary in Gelnhausen (D) enabling a view of the chancel which a purposefully designed altarpiece could conceal or reveal from the fifteenth century onwards by use of sliding doors. The size of the opening and the architecture surrounding it show that this was not an aperture encouraging proximity.

is particularly obvious in cases where a line of sight crosses several squints, such as the double squint at Long Melford, fixing viewers to a certain spot.[22] Small screen squints are constructed for a viewer who would have to move in very close to the screen in order to see anything through them (Figure 8.2), but is then able to control his or her view effectively by inching towards or away from the screen or shifting sideways slightly. In reversal of the situation created by deeply recessing wall squints, slight physical movement in front of a screen squint has a big impact on the view attained.

Screen Squints: Material Evidence

The nature of the screen squint itself makes it difficult to give an empirical overview of the phenomenon. It is often impossible to identify perforations as screen squints with complete certainty based on the visual evidence alone.[23] The varying positioning and irregular shape of squints entails that they may be confused with openings caused differently: During the reign of Edward VI, screens painted with figures were scratched or hacked at, which has sometimes caused holes. Cavities may also have been caused by insects such as the death-watch beetle.[24] Irregular holes in screens were made for the oak pegs used for their assembly and the square pegs used for attaching smaller items of ornament.[25] Finally, perforations could have been caused when screens were reused in different contexts at a later date, taken down or reassembled, or stabilized with iron pegs and brackets.

Bearing these difficulties of identification in mind, the squints on the preliminary list indicate how heterogeneous this phenomenon is (see the Appendix). Formal differences include the shape, size, number, distribution, and spacing of squints in different screens. In terms of shape, they vary from a simple roundel or a roughly round opening (a loophole), to a grouping of holes arranged to form a triangle or cross, to more elaborate shapes such as trefoils, quatrefoils, windows, shields, stars, or crosses. In terms of size, they vary in diameter from about one to twenty centimetres.[26] Some choir screens have several squints arranged below or next to one another, on either side of

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22 Long Melford (Suffolk), Holy Trinity. See Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 97–98, and fig. 46.

23 Close observation and scientific analysis could help with identification in future. So far, the analysis carried out in the context of conservation treatment has (understandably) focused on screens with painted figures, whereas squints are primarily found in screens that now lack paint or are painted with patterns.

24 Possible causes of damage on screens and their conservation treatment are listed in 'Part III: Painting Techniques and Materials, expanded and updated by Pauline Plummer' in Baker, *English Panel Paintings*, pp. 102–11, at p. 111.

25 See the essay on timber and construction of screens by Joe Dawes, 'Part II: Timber and Construction' in Baker, *English Panel Paintings*, pp. 99–102.

26 At opposite ends of the spectrum are South Walsham (Norfolk), where the three holes

FIGURE 8.3. 'Chancel screen with squints, view from chancel', Thompson (Norfolk), St Martin, *c.* 1350. Photo by the author.

the central screen door or just on one side, on the same panel or distributed across several. Other screens have only one squint.

Most squints appear to have been added retrospectively, and therefore were not part of the screen design. In these cases, the wood has splintered around the squints, and if the screen was painted before, the paint has flaked off around the perforations. However, there are examples where the regularity with which squints have been placed or how 'finished' they appear suggests that they were contemporary with the screen.[27] Rather than indicating a historical or stylistic development, this should be seen as yet another variant of the phenomenon.[28] An example which shows the coexistence of both types of screen squints in one church is presented by St Martin in Thompson (Norfolk, Figure 8.3).

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measure only *c.* 1 cm in diameter each (Figure 8.2), and Santon Downham (Suffolk) which has a lancet window 15 cm high (Plate VII).

27 The chancel screen of St Mary in Twyford (Buckinghamshire) has quatrefoil elevation squints at the top of each panel of the screen on both sides of the arch (four on each side). Shalford (Essex) has two finely carved, deep quatrefoils in the middle rail which cannot have been carved in situ. The two cusped lancet squints inserted immediately below in one panel look equally premeditated. Further examples might include the chancel screen of St Peter and Paul in Church Hanborough (Oxfordshire), where every other panel has two lancet window elevation squints. Some later screens have panels of openwork tracery inserted below the transom.

28 Vallance indicates a historical and stylistic development in three steps: from squints 'as informal and utilitarian expedients' to a 'series of regular, symmetrical openings' and finally to become an 'integral part of the scheme and structure of the screen': Vallance, *English Church Screens*, p. 41. A comparison of the dates of screens containing these different types of squints shows that this cannot be seen as a development in screen design, but that these types coexisted.

The mid-fourteenth-century chancel screen has several, for the most part roughly hewn squints. There is physical evidence that they were carved from the west after the erection of the screen, as the wood has splintered around the perforations on the east side. The much later unpainted screen of the south chapel, of which only the dado survives, has three squints that could be premeditated, as they have been fitted into the lozenge-shaped spandrel between the tracery arches of the dado.

Generally, the dating of retrospectively added squints in particular is difficult. A terminus post quem is of course given by the date of the screen. The oldest screen in possession of squints is that at St Michael, Stanton Harcourt (Oxfordshire) from the second half of the thirteenth century (Figure 8.4). The *Oxfordshire* volume of the Buildings of England series dates the squints 'probably C15', without, however, supplying reasons.[29] To complicate matters further, it is quite possible that different squints of one screen are not contemporary with one another, and even that individual squints were worked on over a longer period of time. The need to insert new perforations might have arisen when the physical setting of the screen was altered (for example, when the floor of the chancel was raised), or when there were shifts within the parish community that affected the viewers' situation in front of the screen. The connection of squints to individual viewers is suggested not only where there are marked differences in the height at which the screen has been perforated, but also where multiple squints of one screen have different shapes, showcasing their difference and individuality. This is most obvious at Stanton Harcourt, where there is a simple loophole, as well as quatrefoils, star shapes, various crosses, and a series of perforations which together approximate a window with tracery. Often, shapes seem to start from simple loopholes which are then expanded or grouped into trefoils, quatrefoils, or crosses. The frequent occurrence of crosses formed by connecting three or four loopholes with narrow slits (Stanton Harcourt) or crosses ending in small loopholes (Church Hanborough) suggests this. These examples suggest the possibility that squints were not created in one sitting, but over a longer period of time, maybe connected to regular church visits of their creator(s). It cannot be ruled out that the making of squints in itself might have possessed devotional relevance or value, allowing their creators to work towards a sacred vision in a very literal sense.

Viewers today cannot help but interpret the creation of squints as the result of a destructive gesture, as they disturb a conception of the chancel screen as a finished and self-contained work of art or artefact. Despite examples such as that of Thompson in which the 'tamer' squints of the later screen might suggest a certain amount of dissatisfaction with the appearance of the earlier chancel screen, a closer look at both the relation of squints to the overall design of screens, as well as the distribution of patronage in parish churches

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29   Sherwood and Pevsner, *Oxfordshire*, p. 779.

FIGURE 8.4. 'Chancel screen with squints', Stanton Harcourt (Oxfordshire), St Michael, second half of the thirteenth century. Photo by the author.

reveals the interpretation of squints as traces of destructive transgression as an oversimplification. The rest of this section and the next section expand on these two issues.

Regarding the first point, it is noticeable that even squints that are obviously not part of the overall conception of the screen attempt integration into the material structure and decoration of the screen. Quite simply, for instance, squints were usually inserted to occupy the middle of a dado panel, probably to ensure as clean an insertion as possible. As a result of this, they adhere to the symmetry of the tracery headline. Occasionally, the joint between individual panels has been used as a starting point for their insertion, making splintering and damage less controllable, however. Both centrally and peripherally placed squints can be observed in Thompson (Norfolk). Moreover, the main motifs of the tracery or painted decoration have often influenced the choice of shape of the squints. The example of Roxton (Bedfordshire) shows that even screens painted with figures could have squints.[30] Here, three holes have been drilled into the top of the panels showing saints, filling the upper trefoil of the cusped arch of the tracery. An attempt to echo aspects of the decoration might also

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30 Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, fig. 45.

be seen in South Walsham (Norfolk), where the three small holes in a very rudimentary way echo the trefoil of the blind tracery on the dado (Figure 8.2). The rosette or trefoil opening in the heavily perforated screen of Thompson (Norfolk) is another case in point: The screen has been painted white and decorated with a floral pattern. The only more elaborate squint echoes the outline of this motif, but because the painted pattern is not in line with the distribution of panels of the dado, the squint is not aligned with the pattern. Instead, it occupies the middle of a panel. Sometimes, as in Thompson's aisle chapel screen, shapes provided by blind tracery seem to have been broken through.[31] Generally, then, their creators have endeavoured to make squints blend in ornamentally with their surroundings to a greater or lesser extent. Subordinated to the ornamental principles of the screen, they counteract the breach of its material integrity.

Unsurprisingly for such a heterogeneous phenomenon, there are exceptions. Usually, the squints have been carved into the comparatively thin wood of the panelling, thereby staying within the boundaries created by the screen framework and tracery. The prefabricated squints of St Andrew in Shalford (Essex), however, use the thick transom, and at St Andrew in Saxthorpe (Norfolk), holes have been drilled through the blind tracery and even through the carved foliate decoration of the spandrels. The distribution of squints across the screen in Saxthorpe both vertically and horizontally and the disregard for both decoration and thickness of material suggest that the eye-height of a particular viewer might have been the determining factor here, overriding practical or decorative considerations.

The Role of the Screen in the Parish Church

The evidence given by squints for the balancing of personal, aesthetic, and communal concerns has its origin in the particular economic, social, and devotional context created by the parish church. From the second half of the fifteenth century onwards, a particularly notable number of parish churches was being enlarged, rebuilt, or furnished. According to Eamon Duffy's estimate, almost all parish churches would have already possessed a chancel screen by the beginning of the fifteenth century.[32] The dados that contain squints are but one element of the architectural (and pictorial) ensemble partitioning the nave from the chancel in the Middle Ages. Partitions could be made up of one or several of the following elements: rood lofts that could be reached by stairs in the chancel arch, a wooden tympanum filling the chancel arch, the rood, as well as alabaster reliefs and wooden sculptures. Attention was centred on the rood, destroyed during the Reformation in most parish churches.[33]

31   See also All Saints, Icklingham (Suffolk), St Peter, Cassington (Oxfordshire).
32   Duffy, 'The Parish, Piety, and Patronage', p. 138.
33   For a recent discussion, see Marks, 'Framing the Rood'. The importance of the rood is also

The responsibilities for the various spaces within the parish church were divided. The furnishing, maintenance, and preservation of the western part of the church up to and including the chancel screen were the responsibility of the parish, leaving the clergy responsible for the area beyond the screen. Building and ornamentation of the chancel screen was the job of the parish or individuals within the parish. Testamentary evidence shows that parishioners paid for the painting or gilding of whole screens or individual panels, sometimes even stating which quality they wanted. Donations could be recorded in a number of ways on the screens themselves: On the chancel screen of St Mary, South Walsham (Norfolk), names of individual donors have been painted onto the panels in gold (Figure 8.2); the chancel screen of St Catherine in Ludham (Norfolk) has a carved inscription just below the middle rail which records the gift of fourteen pounds by John and Cecily Salmon in 1493 (Figure 8.5). Often, inscriptions naming donors and benefactors invoke viewers to pray for them.[34]

The documentary evidence on screens and extant screen painting suggests that benefactors could influence the latter, for example by choosing the saints to be depicted and including their name saints, or by having themselves portrayed on the screen. St Catherine in Fritton (Norfolk) preserves a panel of the screen in which John Bacon and his wife and fourteen children are depicted.[35] The chancel screen was a place where individuals and groups within the parish, for example guilds, presented themselves. The standing of individuals within the community and the presentation of their own piety are closely interrelated on screens. In Fritton, rosary beads rendered in low relief are prominently displayed in the hands of the parents and two children.

The evidence of wills and that of the screens themselves thus reveal the threshold to the chancel as focal point within the church space in terms of

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evident in the way that more expensive materials were used in its immediate surroundings: Wrapson and Sinclair, 'The Polychromy of Devon Screens', pp. 158–59.

34 St Catherine, Ludham (Norfolk): 'pray for the sowle of john [Salmon] and cysyly his wyfe that gave forte(n) pu(n)de and for alle other be(n)efactors made in the year of ower lord god at (m)cccclxxxxiii'. St Michael, Aylsham (Norfolk) has an inscription below the figures which names Thomas Wymer and John Jannys as benefactors who paid for the gilding of the screen ('hui(us) op(er)is deaurari feceru(n)t'). The 1502 inscription on the screen of St Botolph, Trunch (Norfolk) invites the viewer to pray for 'all benefactors of this work'. The transcript of inscriptions at Ludham and Aylsham has been taken from the list of known donors of East Anglian screens with paintings provided by Baker, *English Panel Paintings*, pp. 215–29, which has seventy-one examples.

35 Another example from Norfolk is St Thomas in Foxley, where on the late fifteenth-century screen doors the small figures of John Baymonde and his wife Agnes kneel in front of St Jerome and St Ambrose. Scrolls unfurl vertically from their hands, asking viewers to pray for their souls. Baymonde's will of 1485 leaves money towards the painting of the screen: see Duffy, 'The Parish, Piety, and Patronage', p. 142. For photographs of Foxley and Fritton, see Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, plates 124 and 125. Two groups of male and female donors are depicted on a panel in St Matthew's, Ipswich (Suffolk). For photographs, see Baker, *English Panel Paintings*, p. 6 and p. 7.

FIGURE 8.5. 'Chancel screen, view of south elevation', Ludham (Norfolk), St Catherine, *c.* 1493. Photo by the author.

imagery and self-fashioning. The phenomenon of squints is in keeping with this role of the screen. By kneeling at the screen and looking through a squint, a member of the congregation places him- or herself in a very prominent position and possibly becomes a focus of attention in turn, 'leading the […] congregation', as Virginia Chieffo Raguin and Sarah Stanbury put it.[36] As most squints are placed centrally within panels or bays, the tracery frames viewers in the same way it frames figures of saints in the case of painted screens. Squints therefore provide their users with a way of presenting themselves which is comparable to the role of the screen imagery. That the interception of sight lines was moreover a common strategy for self-presentation in the church interior is shown in a different context: Tombs were cleverly placed to intercept sight lines of priests and parishioners alike. The memorial slab placed inside a wall squint in the former Horton chantry at Holy Trinity church, Bradford-on-Avon, is a particularly revealing example of this strategy.[37] Donor inscriptions and imagery on the screen are also instances of a 'presencing mechanism' in memorial contexts.[38] They can be seen not just as recordings

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36 Chieffo Raguin and Stanbury, 'Introduction', pp. 7–8.

37 Roffey, *The Medieval Chantry Chapel*, p. 116. Compare the intriguing sculpture of a human hand probably attached to the south wall of the wall squint at St Catherine, Ludham (Norfolk): Graves, *The Form and Fabric of Belief*, pp. 108–09.

38 Roffey, *The Medieval Chantry Chapel*, p. 111.

of financial support and piety, but also as representational traces of a body position, as turning the physical association and visual merging of the donor's body with the screen during his or her lifetime into text and imagery, thus allowing a continuation of this kind of visual interception after death.

Contrary to what the term 'screen' suggests, late medieval screens were conceived not only as a two-dimensional surface for images, but as three-dimensional structures to be experienced from several angles. Once the dado was subdivided into panels by the middle of the fifteenth century, the sides of stanchions and mullions were often intricately decorated with flowers or patterns, turning individual bays into veritable niches (Figure 8.5). Some screens have survived with a deeper plinth, which might have been intended as or used as a place to kneel on.[39] The screen to a chapel in the north aisle of St James the Great, South Leigh (Oxfordshire) possesses a rose window squint and a window squint on either side of the central passage, under both of which a shelf has been attached to the screen. If the desks are contemporary with the squints,[40] then this certainly suggests that some squints were used in combination with private prayer books, turning the space in front of the screen into a kind of private oratory furnished to meet very personal needs. Even leaving such unusual examples aside, many East Anglian screens appeal to the viewers' sense of touch by including gilded relief ornament in the background of painted panels and on mullions, by turning mullions into miniature niches for relief figures, or by employing techniques such as false mosaic.[41] The existence of squints on screens emphasizes this realization that partitions were not only to be looked at and through from a distance, but something that people came into contact with.

Contemporary depictions of screens in illuminated books and panel paintings equally reflect the notion of screens inviting proximity by showing people leaning on or over a screen and peering through bars, using the screen as a ledge rather than a boundary.[42] Especially in depictions of the Mass of

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39 All Saints, Icklingham (Suffolk); St Nicholas, Salthouse (Norfolk). The sill could also have had this function: compare Figure 8.5.

40 I have not been able to examine the South Leigh parclose screen yet, but the photographs I have seen suggest that the shelves are contemporary with the screen due to the joints between screen and shelf.

41 These techniques are discussed in 'Painting Techniques and Materials, exp. by Pauline Plummer' in Baker, *English Panel Paintings*, pp. 102–11.

42 Depictions of miracles in a church setting often include screens, particularly the Mass of St Gregory: see the outside wings of an altarpiece by the Master of the Aachen Altarpiece (1500) in the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool, where behind the donors three men lean over a stone screen to see the altar, one of which dangles a rosary over the parapet; fol. 415ʳ from a breviary from Namur, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin — Preußischer Kulturbesitz (MS Theol. lat. fol. 285), where two figures peer through the colonnade of a screen (1488/89). See also the Resurrection of Lazarus panel by Albert van Ouwater, Berlin, Staatliche Museen— Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie (1450–60) with people in the ambulatory peering through a barred window into the chancel, two men touching the bars and transom of the opening; Margaret Tudor praying in front of an altar, fol. 243ᵛ of James IV Book of Hours

St Gregory, these figures appear as peripheral witnesses to the miracle depicted centrally or in the foreground of the picture. Often, the screen keeping these figures at a certain distance from the scene serves to emphasize the proximity of other participants (e.g. the painting's donors) to the action. As Jacqueline Jung has pointed out in regard to a painting by Giotto's workshop, however, seeing something through a screen is often interpreted pictorially as having a particularly clear — if distanced — view of something and being able to focus best.[43] Pictorial renditions of inhabited church interiors and the evidence provided by tombs and chantry chapels support what screens and in particular squints suggest: The alignment and framing of a gaze was more important in terms of liturgical and devotional topography than proximity to an altar or an uninterrupted vista. This led to multiple, often contesting, spatial hierarchies at play in late medieval parish churches. The building of chapels could result in a 'dramatic reorganisation of liturgical and perceptual space', causing processional routes to be altered and seating to be rearranged.[44]

Looking through Squints

A question which has not been asked so far is what significance the formal appearance of squints might have had for their function and their effect in the context of the act of seeing. The reason for the prevalence of simple round loopholes was presumably practical: they were the easiest shape to make, as drilling through the panel was sufficient and not much additional carving work was required. One can assume that this is the reason the loophole was used as the starting point for so many other shapes, such as trefoils, quatrefoils, and looser groupings. Other shapes participate in the aesthetic, semantic, and symbolic denotation of the church's interior spaces. Window-shaped squints treat the screen as a wall (Plate VII), thereby participating in the spatial association of the nave with the earthly realm and the chancel with heaven, evoked, for example, in the funeral liturgy. The (rare) occurrence of star-shaped squints points to a similar paralleling of the spatial division between nave and chancel with that between earth and heaven.[45] Quatrefoil and cross-shaped squints relate to the main theme of the chancel screen,

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(c. 1503) in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna (Cod. 1897), where people peering through the colonnade of a screen can be seen in the background, one figure dangling an arm across the parapet.

43   Jung, 'Seeing through Screens', pp. 186–88. The wall painting in the Upper Church of S. Francesco at Assisi shows the Christmas Miracle at Greccio.

44   Graves, 'Social Space in the English Medieval Parish Church', p. 317. See also Roffey, *The Medieval Chantry Chapel*, pp. 112–13.

45   The chancel screen in Stanton Harcourt (Oxfordshire) has two star-shaped squints. Painted/ gesso stars were probably often found on screen vaults, few of which survive. An exception is the chancel screen at St Andrew, Bramfield (Suffolk), where the vault is painted blue and has silver stars. For a photograph, see Baker, *English Panel Paintings*, p. 110.

the rood. Especially cross-shaped squints seem to me to be of considerable interest as, unlike trefoils, quatrefoils, or even roundels, their shape does not derive from or echo the smaller decorative units of tracery. Crosses do not have ornamental or stylistic value primarily, but instead they take up the pictorial, gestural, and symbolic emphasis of the east end of a church. As well as dominating the threshold to the chancel in the rood group, the crucifixion was the common subject for the glass of the east window. The cross appeared beneath the chancel arch, on the altar, and on the chasuble of the celebrant. Signing the cross played an integral role in the Sarum rite which was used most widely in late medieval England and Wales.[46] From a practical point of view, the cross shape is a surprising choice, because — depending on the size of the opening, of course — it does not present a continuous area of perforated surface and therefore does not serve particularly well as a window. It is notable that of the screens with prefabricated perforations, there are none with rows of crosses, suggesting that the cross-shape had a specific personal salvific importance for the creator and user of the squint. In looking through a cross-shaped squint, the cut-out transporting the vision would render what was seen into a cross shape. Looking at the elevation, the viewer would have been looking at the raised Host through the shape of the cross, turning the Host into the body of Christ on the cross visually. Looking through a cross-shaped aperture enhances the pictorial value of the acts taking place in the chancel, turning the screen into a very personal visual medium. Furthermore, the enlarged and well-lit chancel of late medieval parish churches would have made the aperture stand out as a bright cross against the backlit screen.[47] The contrast was presumably so marked that the cross would have imprinted itself on the eye of the beholder as an afterimage even beyond the act of looking.

There are two connected aspects here that resonate with regard to late medieval visuality and devotion: The notion of the process of sight as transported by a squint, and the personalization and intimacy of ritual offered by means of self-controlled sensory access. The physiological effect of looking through a squint into a brightly lit space is particularly relevant in the context of the medieval understanding of sight and the process of vision. Throughout the Middle Ages, the eyes are metaphorized as doors and windows of the soul or the heart, to be closely guarded and controlled lest they should let the wrong images in. Several studies have recently emphasized the tactile aspects of seeing which feature prominently in medieval texts.[48] Gudrun Schleusener-Eichholz's two-volume study on the eye in the Middle Ages contains countless examples of the quasi-tactile effect of strong light

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46 See Graves, *The Form and Fabric of Belief*, p. 104.

47 Duffy states that the big wooden tympanums inserted behind the rood in the chancel arches were made necessary by the creation of large east windows in the later Middle Ages, which made it difficult for people to see the rood: Duffy, 'The Parish, Piety, and Patronage', p. 137.

48 See the comprehensive discussion of this aspect in Berthold Hub's contribution in this volume and Biernoff, *Sight and Embodiment*, ch. 6.

on the eye, and on the eye as a mirror, reflecting what it encounters.[49] More specifically, the phenomenon of the afterimage is used by Ibn al-Haytham (Alhazen in the Latinate world), an Arabic writer on optics around the turn of the tenth century widely read in medieval Europe, to ground his theory that light produces an effect in the eye as illumination lingers on past the moment of sight.[50] This thinking was the basis of the intromission theory of vision later expanded upon by Roger Bacon and others. Rather than proving how widely distributed the intromission theory was, the material evidence provided by the squints suggests that their creators knew how to bring about a particularly 'effective' vision in medieval terms — whether this knowledge was gained theoretically or practically. By reducing possible points of entry, squints make the eye less vulnerable to 'dangerous' images, at the same time increasing seeing power by limiting vision to one eye.[51] They might therefore be considered as material traces of the idea that certain parameters influenced the strength of vision, which Berthold Hub calls 'performative' in his contribution to this volume. Furthermore, they provide evidence of a bottom-up rather than top-down (perspectivist) approach to vision.[52]

The notion of light played an integral role within this 'common sense' understanding of the act of seeing, its significance going beyond optics. Countless gifts of candles and torches left in wills, to be burned in front of the rood or around the altar during the sacring, show that light was essential to the visual appearance of the east end of the church and was especially associated with the Host. As well as providing better visibility and ensuring an optimal transport of the vision of the holy, these lights were probably thought to absorb the grace bestowed in their vicinity, acting as 'a sort of proxy for the adoring presence of the donor'.[53] The phenomenon of the cross-shaped screen squint suggests that squints might have been perceived as a sort of external sensory organ limited to salvific sight which would impress itself on the viewer's mind particularly well by being transmitted in a significant shape.

The unusual example of squints in the shape of shields on the chancel screen in St Ethelbert, Hessett (Suffolk) further supports the closely related issues of a strong physical connection between squint and viewer, with strong ties to medieval vision and parochial representation. Not only does the shield give expression to the conviction that the viewer's eyes will be protected against dangerous images by covering it with a particularly beneficial image,

49 Schleusener-Eichholz, *Das Auge im Mittelalter*.
50 *De aspectibus* (*Kitāb al-Manāzir*), bk i, ch. 1. Smith, 'Alhacen's Theory of Visual Perception', p. 343. Cf. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision*, p. 62.
51 For the concept of seeing better with one eye (for example when taking aim) reflected in medieval texts, see Lindberg, *Theories of Vision*, p. 36; Schleusener-Eichholz, *Das Auge im Mittelalter*, i, 76–77.
52 See Hub's contribution to this volume.
53 Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, p. 96. On the importance of lights at the elevation, see also Kratzke, 'Ausstrahlung und Anblick', p. 90.

but the shield as a sign denoting ownership enables its user to emblazon the body of Christ onto 'their' shield.

In this sense, the creation of squints is connected to one particular aspect of specifically English late medieval popular devotion: religious recluses. While anchorites played an increasingly important role from the thirteenth century onwards,[54] they became 'icons of popular devotion and models for both lay and monastic reading' in the late Middle Ages.[55] The phenomenon of squints may well be connected to that of anchorites' hagioscopes. A guide for anchoresses written in the thirteenth century, the *Ancrene Riwle*, describes three windows: one opening into the interior of the church, enabling the anchoress to visually take part in the Mass, a second window to receive food, and a third to communicate with the outside world.[56] The *Riwle* recommends that when they are not in use, windows are to be kept shut, and even when open they should still be covered with a black curtain containing merely a cross-shaped area rendered in white material.[57] There are obvious parallels to squints in that the apertures are understood as externalized eyes, and in the role light plays within this notion, transmitted through significant shapes.

The personal, emotional attachment to hagioscopes and squints suggested by these examples is connected to the kind of vision they allow:[58] 'the viewer projects visually into the space beyond; squints work something like binoculars, and though they do not magnify they give you [a] sense of being an intimate participant'.[59] The closeness established optically and the resulting intimacy are particularly relevant in the functional context: Binski speaks of squints enabling 'miniature "privatizations" of the sight of the elevated Host'.[60] On the material side, squints offer their users a way of controlling the size of their field of vision by moving in relation to the screen. Control over the cut-out provided by the squint would allow the viewer to exclude acolytes and other people attending Mass in the chancel and create an exclusive sensory experience of the Host. In this sense, the squint functions as a simple focusing frame and guide of attention. The emphasis on interiority in late medieval religion, and especially the tendency of creating an intimate relationship by means of channelling focus, has been noted in other areas (and media) of devotional culture, for example in the 'ocular directives' employed in Nicolas Love's widely read *Mirror of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Crist* (1410) which aim 'to

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54 See the anchorite distribution numbers in Warren, *Anchorites and their Patrons*, Appendix 1.

55 Bryan, *Looking Inward*, p. 15.

56 On anchorholds in England, see Warren, *Anchorites and their Patrons*, pp. 29–41 on equipment of the rooms.

57 See Warren, *Anchorites and their Patrons*, p. 31. For the 'seemingly ubiquitous' visual presence of the cross in the visions of Julian of Norwich, see Biernoff, *Sight and Embodiment*, ch. 6, esp. p. 137.

58 The *Ancrene Riwle* warns anchorites not to get too attached to their windows: see Warren, *Anchorites and their Patrons*, p. 31.

59 Chieffo Raguin and Stanbury, 'Introduction', p. 8.

60 Binski, 'The English Parish Church and its Art', p. 14.

stimulate affective piety through a powerfully experienced incarnational aesthetic, creating a highly personalised and one-to-one engagement or even identification of the spectator with the Virgin or with Christ'.[61] This kind of highly personal affection in the experience of religion is most famously expressed by Norfolk's Margery Kempe.

There is a lot to suggest, then, that squints were valued for their ability to optically and pictorially enhance the sensory impact of liturgical actions. They are indeed a material phenomenon that allows us to grasp, to a certain extent, the relationship between medieval vision and medieval visuality. Squints and the variety of shapes they take show that how something was seen was just as important as what was seen, if not more so, and that elements channelling or intercepting the gaze are integral to this question of 'how'. Inherent in squints, which were probably made by individual people, is the opportunity of creating and then controlling one's own vision to the extent of turning it into a particularly pertinent (and personal) image. This becomes particularly obvious with cross-shaped squints, where decorative concerns can be excluded. By offering the possibility of turning the Host into Christ on the cross visually, they testify to the importance of images and image-making within late medieval liturgy and devotion on a very individual (rather than artistic) level. Squints therefore offer insight into an additional aspect of visuality, one set apart from but at the same time expanding that commonly addressed by art historians.

The pictorial potential of squints is intricately bound up with their function as an optical tool, emphasizing what church furnishings as a whole show: the preference of a framed view over a clear view, the significance of the aligned gaze rather than the proximity to ritual centres.[62] At the same time as functionally being connected to the individual and his or her perception and devotion, there is a social dimension to squints: to be seen against the backdrop of the screen, the representative and pictorial focus of the parish (church), was probably deemed an eminent position within the church space. After all, those kneeling by the screen were included in the periphery of the vision of the Host as it presented itself to the 'backbenchers', an instance of 'the spaces one sees *through* […] [being] socially significant'.[63]

Because they can be seen as traces of experience, squints shed light on diverse aspects of late medieval culture: the importance of the visual sense in the liturgy, the physical and visual interaction with the screen as a socially shaped object and substrate for images, and the importance accorded to prerequisites of perception such as distance and light. While screen squints are not the norm, a closer look at this heterogeneous phenomenon has shown that squints offer insights into the parish church as a social space in

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61   Stanbury, *The Visual Object of Desire*, p. 183.
62   Compare Roffey, *The Medieval Chantry Chapel*. For screens: Jung, 'Seeing through Screens'.
63   Graves, *The Form and Fabric of Belief*, p. 11.

which concerns such as those of *memoria* and self-presentation are intricately bound up with liturgical and devotional needs. The screen served as one of the prime media for these concerns, and the occasional insertion of squints further highlights what a central role vision and the visual played in the experience of church space.

Appendix: A Preliminary List of Screen Squints in England and Wales

The following preliminary list has all screen squints that I have been able to find out about to date, either in the literature, by travel, or through Internet resources.[64] It includes information on their shape, number, and distribution across panels. While the list is neither complete nor representative, it will hopefully provide a starting point for further research. I have included squints of Vallance's 'regular series' type, but excluded those he refers to as 'integral part of the scheme and structure of the screen' which can be more accurately described as openwork or panels of pierced tracery.[65] References to publications indicate where I found mention of the squint(s) or reproductions; descriptions are mine, and I have been as accurate as is possible at this stage.

Bedfordshire	Roxton, St Mary: Chancel screen, painted: figures. Groupings of three loopholes in 10/12 panels. Duffy, The Stripping of the Altars, p. 97 and fig. 45.
Buckinghamshire	Monks Risborough, St Dunstan: Chancel screen (?), painted: figures. At least 1 possible squint (loophole).
	Twyford, St Mary: Chancel screen, painted: polychromy and pattern. Eight quatrefoils, one in each panel.
Cambridgeshire	Bluntisham, St Mary: Dismantled chancel screen, painted: figures. Two possible squints (loopholes) in the extant panels (St George and St John the Baptist).
	Hinxton, St Mary and St John: Chancel screen, unpainted. At least one cruciform squint.
Denbighshire (W)	Abergele, St Michael: Chancel screen, unpainted. Squints of varying shapes in all of the panels. Vallance, English Church Screens, p. 41.
Derbyshire	Elvaston, St Bartholomew: Parclose screen (S aisle). Vallance, English Church Screens, p. 41.
Essex	Shalford, St Andrew: Chancel screen, unpainted. Two quatrefoils in the transom, two cusped lancets in the panel below (N); at least one trefoil (S).
Hampshire	Winchester, St John the Baptist: Chapel screen (N aisle), unpainted. Three quatrefoils (S); further instances unknown. Extant wall squint. Roffey, The Medieval Chantry Chapel, p. 97.
Herefordshire	Llandinabo, St Junabius: Chancel screen, unpainted. One or two gothic loop-lights per panel (9 panels and 13 apertures). Vallance, English Church Screens, p. 41.

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64 Simon Knott and his websites 'Churches of East Anglia: Norfolk' and 'Churches of East Anglia: Suffolk' have been helpful, and there is a large community of people sharing photos of parish churches on Flickr, <http://www.flickr.com>.

65 Vallance, English Church Screens, p. 41.

Kent	Ash, St Nicholas: Parclose screen (?). No further details known. Vallance, English Church Screens, p. 41.
	Newington Next Sittingbourne, St Mary: Parclose screen. 2 cruciform squints on 2/12 panels. Vallance, English Church Screens, p. 41.
Monmouthshire (W)	Abergavenny, St Mary: Choir stall screens, unpainted.[66] Dado at the west end has two loopholes; there are grid-like insertions on the stall-backs of both the south and north lateral stalls, adjacent to the Herbert and Lewis chapels, respectively.
Norfolk	Colton, St Andrew: Chancel screen, heavily restored, unpainted. One quatrefoil (S). Vallance, English Church Screens, p. 41.
	Mautby, St Peter and St Paul: Chancel screen, unpainted. One lancet (S). See Knott, 'Norfolk', Mautby.
	Saxthorpe, St Andrew: Chancel screen, painted: polychromy and pattern. Eleven possible squints (roughly round holes) across 7/8 panels. For photographs, see Knott, 'Norfolk', Saxthorpe.
	South Burlingham, St Edmund: Chancel screen, painted: polychromy and pattern. Three loopholes (N), one cross (S) on 4/12 panels. Duffy, The Stripping of the Altars, p. 97 and fig. 44.
	South Walsham, St Mary: Chancel screen, painted: polychromy and pattern with names of donors. One grouping of three small round holes inside the trefoil of the tracery arch (S). Duffy, The Stripping of the Altars, p. 97.
	Thompson, St Martin: 1. Chancel screen, painted: polychromy and pattern. Barbed trefoil (S) and several further possible irregular squints (N, S). 2. Chapel screen (S aisle), unpainted. Three quatrefoils broken through in 3/8 panels. Lunnon, 'Observations', p. 120.
	Titchwell, St Mary: Chancel screen, painted: traces of polychromy. One rough cross-shaped squint (S).
	Walpole, St Peter: Chapel screen (S aisle), unpainted. At least three groupings of three round holes in the cusps of the head tracery (E); further instances unknown.
	Wickhampton, St Andrew: Chancel screen, unpainted. Two barbed quatrefoils, two quatrefoils, one trefoil (S) in 3/8 panels. Camm, 'Some Norfolk Rood-Screens', fig. on p. 254.
Northamptonshire	Rushden, St Mary: Chancel screen (?). No further details known. Vallance, English Church Screens, p. 41.
Nottinghamshire	Wysall, Holy Trinity: Chancel screen, unpainted. One grouping of four holes, two single loopholes, a double loophole, a grouping of three holes (S). Vallance, English Church Screens, plate 84 on p. 39.

66 I am grateful to Robert Gibbs (Glasgow) for calling my attention to the squints in this priory (!) church. The edited volume published in 2015, Nash, An Anatomy of a Priory Church, does not mention the squints or openwork.

Oxfordshire	Cassington, St Peter. Chancel screen, unpainted. Out of ten lancets in the head tracery, four have been broken through with squints.
	Church Hanborough, St Peter and St Paul: 1. Chancel screen, painted: polychromy. At least three double lancets (N), further instances unknown. 2. Screen to chapel (N aisle), traces of polychromy. One cross-shaped squint. 3. Screen to chapel (S aisle), painted: polychromy. Two crosses, one lancet window. Vallance, English Church Screens, p. 41.
	South Leigh, St James the Great: Chapel screen (N aisle), unpainted. One quatrefoil, one window. Shelves attached beneath the squints. Vallance, English Church Screens, p. 4.
	Stanton Harcourt, St Michael: Chancel screen, partly painted: figure. 14 squints: several quatrefoils and cross shapes (S), round hole, two stars, one window, two quatrefoils, and one cross (N). Vallance, English Church Screens, p. 40; Sherwood and Pevsner, Oxfordshire, p. 779.
	Woodeaton, Holy Rood: Chancel screen, unpainted. Four loopholes of different sizes (S); further instances unknown.
Somerset	Cheddar, St Andrew: Screen to chapel (N aisle), unpainted. Five cusped lancets broken through tracery in 5/6 panels (W). Vallance, English Church Screens, p. 41; Roffey, The Medieval Chantry Chapel, p. 97 and fig. 45.
Suffolk	Cowlinge, St Margaret of Antioch: Chancel screen, unpainted. Three groupings of four holes, three single loopholes, one lancet window, and one rough loophole on both sides of the screen door and at different heights across 7/10 panels. Extant wall squint. For photographs, see Knott, 'Suffolk', Cowlinge.
	Hessett, St Ethelbert: Chancel screen, painted: polychromy and pattern. Two shield-shaped squints, one blocked up, in each bay (N). Vallance, English Church Screens, p. 40; for photographs, see Knott, 'Suffolk', Hesslett.
	Icklingham, All Saints: Chancel screen, unpainted. Trefoils fitted into the tracery on 3/8 panels. For photographs, see Knott, 'Suffolk', Icklingham All Saints.
	Lavenham, St Peter and St Paul: 1. Chancel screen, unpainted. More or less regular series of trefoils across all panels (7 on right, 6 on left of door). Carving of the openings at slight upward angle. 2. Spring parclose screen (N aisle), traces of paint. Four loopholes in 3/6 panels (W end). 3. Spourne chapel screen (S aisle), unpainted. Two trefoils in 2/6 panels, and three possible loopholes within tracery heads. Vallance, English Church Screens, p. 41; Duffy, The Stripping of the Altars, p. 97 and fig. 53; Chieffo Raguin and Stanbury, Women's Space, title page.
	Santon Downham, St Mary: Chancel screen, painted: polychromy and pattern. One window squint.

Sussex	Bignor, Holy cross: Chancel screen, unpainted. Two groupings of four at top and bottom (!) of the middle panel, both on the right and on the left of the door.
	Bury, St John: Chancel screen, unpainted. Two groupings of four holes at different heights.

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